

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**ANALYSIS OF CONCORD ERRORS IN THE WRITTEN ESSAYS AND  
OBJECTIVE TESTS OF JHS TWO(2) PUPILS OF AYETEPA D/A BASIC  
'A' AND 'B' SCHOOLS**



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**A dissertation in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign  
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Studies in partial fulfillment**

**of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Education  
(Teaching English as a Second Language)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**SEPTEMBER, 2019.**

## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Florence Mansah Katernor, declare that this dissertation with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, it is entirely my own original work and it has not been submitted either in part or whole for another degree.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name: Dr. Charlotte Fofu Lomotey

Signature: .....

Date: .....

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God Almighty, my siblings and William for supporting me in diverse ways.

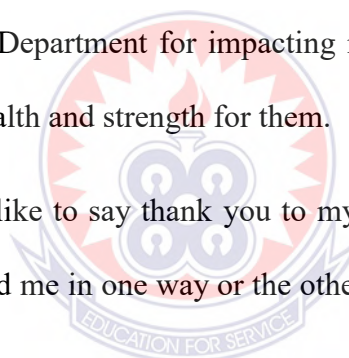


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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Scope of the Study	5
1.4 Objectives of the Study	5
1.5 Research Questions	5
1.6 Significance of the Study	6
1.7 Delimitation of the Study	6
1.8 Limitations of the Study	6
1.9 Organisation of the Study	7
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>8</b>
2.0 Introduction	8
2.1 The concept of Error	8
2.2 Error and Mistake	10

2.3	Causes of Concord Errors	12
2.3.1	Interlingual causes	12
2.3.2	Intralingual causes	12
2.3.3	Communication strategy-based errors	12
2.3.4	Context of learning	13
2.3.5	Simplification	13
2.3.6	Overgeneralization	13
2.3.7	Hypercorrection	13
2.3.8	Faulty teaching	13
2.3.9	Avoidance	14
2.3.10	Inadequate learning	14
2.3.11	False concepts hypothesized	14
2.4	The Notion of Concord	14
2.5	Types of Concord	16
2.5.1	Grammatical concord	16
2.5.2	Notional concord	17
2.5.3	Tense concord	18
2.5.4	Proximity concord	20
2.5.5	Summary	21
2.6	Possible Areas of Concord Errors	21
2.6.1	Typical developmental errors	22
2.6.2	Notional concord errors	22
2.6.3	Proximity concord errors	23
2.6.4	Memory limitation concord errors	24
2.6.5	Omission of the /-s/ factor	24
2.6.6	Inability to identify headword	25
2.6.7	Summary	26

2.7	Importance of Errors in Teaching and Learning of English Language	26
2.8	Related Studies	29
2.9	Conclusion	33
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>		<b>34</b>
3.0	Introduction	34
3.1	Research Design	34
3.2	Population and Sampling	35
3.3	Sample Size and Sampling Technique	36
3.4	Data Collection Instrument	38
3.4.1	Test (objective/subjective)	38
3.5	Validity	39
3.6	Trustworthiness	39
3.7	Data Collection Process	40
3.8	Data Analysis	41
3.9	Ethical Considerations	41
3.10	Conclusion	42
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS</b>		<b>43</b>
4.0	Introduction	43
4.1	Categorization of Concord Errors	43
4.1.1	Grammatical concord error	44
4.1.1.1	Pronoun-antecedent/relative pronoun concord errors	44
4.1.1.2	Constructions with more than one concord errors	45
4.1.1.3	Plural subject with singular verb	46
4.1.1.4	Singular subjects with plural verbs	47



4.1.1.5 Notional/collective noun concord error	48
4.1.2 Determiner-noun concord errors	50
4.1.2.1 Determiner-count noun error	51
4.1.2.2 Determiner-non-count noun error	52
4.1.3 Verb-tense concord errors	54
4.1.3.1 Simple past tense	55
4.1.3.2 Simple present tense	56
4.1.3.3 Simple future aspect	57
4.1.4 Indefinite pronoun concord error	59
4.1.4.1 Singular Indefinite Pronoun	61
4.1.4.2 Singular indefinite pronoun with prepositional phrase concord error	62
4.1.5 Proximity concord errors	64
4.1.5.1 Subordinator/accompaniment concord error	64
4.1.5.2 Coordinator concord error	66
4.1.5.2 Correlative concord error	67
4.1.5 Summary of the categorization of concord errors	69
4.2 Causes of Pupils' Concord Errors	71
4.2.1 Interlingual transfer	72
4.2.2 Intralingual transfer	74
4.2.3 Overgeneralization/false concept hypothesis	74
4.2.4 False analogy	75
4.2.5 Incomplete application of rules	76
4.2.6 Summary	76
4.3 Conclusion	76

<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>78</b>
5.0 Introduction	78
5.1 Summary of Findings	78
5.2 The Role of Concord in the Teaching and Learning of English Language ...	79
5.3 Pedagogical Implications	81
5.4 Suggestions for Future Research	82
5.5 Conclusion	83
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>90</b>



## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>	<b>Page</b>
4.1.1: Grammatical Concord Errors	49
4.1.2: Determiner Noun Concord Errors	53
4.1.3: Verb-Tense Concord Errors	58
4.1.4: Indefinite Pronoun Concord Errors	63
4.1.5: Proximity Concord Errors	68
4.1.6: Categories of Concord Errors	69



## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Page</b>
4.1.1: Grammatical Concord Errors	50
4.1.2: Determiner Noun Concord Errors	54
4.1.3: Verb-tense concord errors	59
4.1.4: Indefinite Pronoun Concord Errors	63
4.1.5: Proximity concord errors	69
4.1.6: Categories of Concord Errors	71



## ABSTRACT

Studies have shown that the major English writing problem area of students is the violation of English concord rules. The pupils of Ayetepa Basic Schools are no exception of this problem. Although concord rules are taught at the primary level and even in JHS 1, the JHS 2 pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic „A“ and „B“ still have challenges making the words in their sentences agree with one another. This study therefore examined the specific concord errors that JHS 2 pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic „A“ and „B“ schools have challenges in and also to find out the possible causes of these errors. A qualitative research design was adopted to randomly sample 60 pupils from the two schools. Both written essays and objective test items were employed to gather the data for analysis. Different concord errors identified in the data are grammatical concord errors, determiner-noun concord errors, verb tense concord errors, indefinite pronoun concord errors, and proximity concord errors. From these types, the errors were seen to have been caused by L1 interference, ignorance of rule restrictions, and incomplete application of rules, overgeneralization, and false analogy. Based on the results, it is argued that teachers need to use variety of techniques in lesson delivery in order for the pupils to produce English sentences without concord errors.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Ghana is a multilingual country with an estimate of 250 different spoken Ghanaian languages; however, English Language is the country's official language and dominates government and business affairs. It remains the standard language for educational instruction. Ghana uses English as a second language and its main medium of acquisition is through formal education. English has remained the single most important language in Ghana because it plays a lot of important roles, especially in education and employment (Boahemaa, 2014). It has remained a prerequisite for admission into any educational institution and employment. Admission into any institution after Junior High School requires a pass in the English language. To qualify for any job in the civil or public sector of the country also requires a pass or credit in English.

From the pre-colonial and post-colonial periods, English has been taught as a subject ever since. For instance, from 1974 to 2002, a local Ghanaian language was used as a medium of instruction for the first three years of the primary school, and then a switch to English as the medium of instruction from Primary Four upwards. However, in May 2002, the medium of instruction at all levels of education was changed to English Language. There are reasons that espoused an English-only language policy in education. And they are: to enable pupils to gain a high level of proficiency in English, this is because all examinations are conducted in English, and to allow free movement of pupils across linguistic areas because of the multilingual nature of the nation and its classrooms, and finally to avoid the delay in introducing English to children.

The current National Language Policy states that in the first three years of primary education, the Ghanaian language prevalent in the local area must be used as the medium of instruction while English is studied as a subject. From Primary 4, English replaces the Ghanaian Language as a medium of instruction, and the Ghanaian language is treated as just another subject on the time-table. Although the child is taught some components of the target language at the Lower Primary, the swift shift from a known medium of instruction to an alien one usually poses challenges to the pupils, orally and in written form as well in the target language. As a result of this, learners fall back on their mother tongue (L1) when their linguistic means fall short of achieving communication, orally or in writing. This leads to intralingual errors that learners climb the educational ladder with if they are not correct earlier before they become fossilized.

Students of Ayetepa Basic „A“ and „B“ Junior High Schools live in a typical fishing community where only 5% of the town’s population are literates. Hardly is English spoken anywhere else apart from the classroom environment, not even in the school’s environment. This is because the place is a monolingual town, therefore, all the pupils speak the same mother tongue. As a result, they prefer communicating in the mother tongue rather than in English. This practice, coupled with the fact that illiteracy rate is very high in the Ayetepa community has practically crippled their communication competence and it has eventually translated into their writings. Prominent of it is their poor concord usage, orally and in writing. Like Mahmoud (2000) rightly puts it, the influence of the mother tongue and the pervasiveness of interlingual transfer are indisputable, especially in learning situations where learners’ exposure to the second language is confined to a few hours per week of formal classroom instruction.

Over the past decade, pupils' performance in the English language remains questionable. The results have not been consistent over time. A notable area of concern is the use of concord. Concord is the relationship between two grammatical units such that one of them displays a particular feature or plurality that accords with a displayed or semantically explicit feature in the other. Concord errors can hinder effective communication and generate a feeling of disappointment in the effectiveness of our institutions. It is against such background that this study examined the concord errors in the writings of the JHS 2 Pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic „A“ and „B“ schools in the Ningo-Prampram district of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Ghana has many concerns about English standards. English studies is a topic designed to satisfy the language needs of students as they progress in formal education. However, language learning seems to be becoming increasingly difficult for students, especially those at the basic level. Although English is the official language of Ghana, every year the BECE results show a decline in candidate performance. The latest (2018) report contains comments like: “poor performance of most candidates is because they do not Speak English Well”. It is obvious that even when candidates are not able to perform well in other subjects such as Social Studies, Mathematics, the blame is laid at the doorsteps of the English Language teacher. The English syllabus for basic schools underlines the importance of English language in the curriculum. The English syllabus for Junior High Schools treats concord rules as one of the important topics in grammar. Pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic „A“ and „B“ schools usually perform poorly in English language examinations because of factors such as late introduction to the second language due to the NALAP policy, inadequate English teachers, untrained English language teachers handling the English, the



pupils' inability to apply correctly the rules of concord in their writings among other causes. These students usually forget that the many parts of a sentence must work together to communicate their ideas clearly and effectively. Words within sentences should be arranged in an understanding pattern, and the words should have certain relationships with one another. In other words, these words must have agreement. These pupils always violate these agreement rules, hence commit concord errors.

Learning a second language is a gradual process which comes with errors. But the use of Error Analysis and the employment of appropriate error reduction strategies in the classroom can help minimize learners' errors, and promote effective teaching and learning of the English language. Errors play an important role in learning a second language because teachers can predict the level of mastery of language among their students and discover what they still have to learn, unlearn, or relearn. It will also give teachers the opportunity to understand the different processes through which these errors are caused, like interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, and context of learning,

According to Corder (1974), systematically analyzing errors made by language learners makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching. Thagg-Fisher (1985) carried a research on the analysis of concord errors of Swedish learners of English produced in their translation and composition test. And it was found out that concord error density does not differ in spoken and non-creative text production. Since English language encompasses several skills, it becomes worrying if some of these skills are affected negatively. Although there is no disputable fact about the positive sides of learners' errors to teachers, researchers, textbook writers and many others, if the errors are not identified and redressed, they will cause great harm to the learner. This is because English language is the pivot around which

other subjects taught in schools revolve. For example, in an era in Ghana where students are expected to pass English language before they can gain admission to institutions of higher learning, a fail can prevent them from continuing their education. To address this problem, the current study sets out to analyze concord errors JHS 2 Pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic 'A' and 'B' Schools have challenges in, the causes and pedagogical implications of these errors.

### **1.3 Scope of the Study**

Even though there are other equally important errors JHS 2 Pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic „A“ and „B“ schools have problems with. The focus of this study is on the application of English concord rules and, how the pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic „A“ and „B“ apply these rules in their writings. The study focuses on grammatical concord, determiner-noun concord errors, tense concord errors, indefinite pronoun concord errors and proximity concord errors.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the types of concord errors the JHS 2 Pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic 'A' and 'B' Schools commits in their essay and objective test items.
2. To discuss the causes of the errors they commit.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

This study seeks to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What specific concord errors do JHS 2 Pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic 'A' and 'B' Schools make?
2. What are the causes of the concord errors they make?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Through research, one is able to establish facts about an issue. These facts adds to an existing knowledge when they are established. The findings of this study provides useful information to stakeholders in education, researchers, textbook writers, curriculum designers and the students as well. First, it enlightens teachers on the types of errors have major problems in, and the causes. This alerts teachers to re-examine their approaches of teaching. It will also let teachers know what learners learned, have to learn or relearn. Also it helps pupils to identify and correct their own errors with time. And it gives curriculum planners enough input on how to design appropriate language programs and resources for the basic school. Finally the findings will add to existing knowledge.

## **1.7 Delimitation of the Study**

The study was carried on JHS 2 Pupils of Ayetepa and nowhere else because the researcher is the same person that teaches them the English language, hence knows the problems the pupils have in concord. The research concentrates on only concord errors, the causes and the pedagogical implications on the teaching and learning of English language.

## **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

The researcher employed serveral means to ensure smooth execusion of the study, however, some difficulties were unavoidable in the conduct of the study which included inability to conduct interview with the other English language teacher whose students took part in this study to understand the issue from the teacher's perspective. Also, it would have been ideal if the study was conducted among all JHS 2 pupils in all the schools in Ayetepa to get a broader picture on the state of issues, but time was a constraint ,considering the number of scripts that will have to be

analyzed, study was conducted on just pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic 'A' and 'B' Schools.

### **1.9 Organisation of the Study**

The rest of the dissertation is organized as follows: Chapter 2 presents the review of literature. It focuses on views relevant on concord errors, namely, the concept of concord errors, errors and mistakes, causes of concord errors, the significance of errors, the concept of concord, types of concord, possible areas concord errors rise from, importance of errors and related review. Chapter 3 discusses the following the research methodology. The discussion touches on the research design, the population, sample and sample size, the sampling technique employed, the data collection tools used, validity, trustworthiness and how the data were analysed. Chapter 4 discusses the data findings from the analysis of data. It was revealed that grammatical concord recorded the highest errors out of the five different types of errors analyzed. The final chapter; Chapter 5, presents the conclusion, including introduction, summary of findings, role of errors in the teaching and learning of English, pedagogical implications, suggestions for future research study and concluded the study by offering a number of recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

A critical review of literature is essential to help the researcher get a deeper understanding of previous studies related to research questions and goals. This chapter discusses available literature on the topic for this study and provides justifications for further investigation of the topic. The literature review basically includes: the concept of errors, errors and mistakes, causes of concord errors, the notion of concord, types of concord, possible areas where concord errors is likely to arise, summary, importance of errors , review of related studies and conclusion.

#### 2.1 The concept of Error

Errors are considered the flawed side of a learner's speech or writing. They are those parts of conversation and composition that deviate from some selected norms of mature language performance (Habibullah, 2010). Sackeyfio (1996, pp. 16-17) refers to this deviation as miscellaneous errors of the English classroom and put them under three convenient sub-headings as a) linguistic, b) non-linguistic, but explainable and c) unexplainable. She indicates that the linguistic factors have the problems coming from errors that stem from the first language of the learner and the second language itself. This area is of keen interest to the researcher because the respondents are second language learners with a different mother tongue (Dangme) background which has the tendency of interfering in the learning of the second language as the two languages have different structures altogether. Moreover, the respondents are at the developmental stage of learning this second language (English), and have not fully grasped the various rules of the second language; as a result, there will be confusion as they attempt to apply these rules. This will give way to intralingual interference

factors such as; overgeneralization, false concepts hypothesized, avoidance, simplification, etc. which are some of the causes of errors.

language learning, while intralingual errors are caused by the target language itself like: false analogy, misanalysis (learners form a wrong hypothesis), incomplete rule application, (this is the converse of overgeneralization or one might call it undergeneralization as the learners do not use all the rules), exploiting redundancy (this error occurs by carrying considerable redundancy). This is shown throughout the system in the form of unnecessary morphology and double signalling), overlooking co-occurrence restrictions (caused by overlooking the exceptional rules), hypercorrection or monitor use (due to learners' over cautious and strict observance of rules) and overgeneralization or system simplification (caused by the misuse of words or grammatical rules) (James, 1998).

Touchie (1986, p. 77) indicates that researchers in the field of applied linguistics usually distinguish between two types of errors: performance errors and competence errors. He states that performance errors are those errors made by learners when they are tired or hurried. He indicates that such errors are not serious and can be overcome with little effort by the learner. But competence errors are more serious than performance errors since competence errors reflect inadequate learning. He points that researchers such as (cf. Gefen, 1979) distinguish between mistakes which are lapses in performance and errors which reflect inadequate competence. He states further that other researchers (cf. Burt & Kiparsky, 1974) distinguish between local and global errors. He says that these researchers indicate that local errors do not hinder communication and understanding of the meaning of an utterance and that global errors are more serious than local errors because global errors interfere with communication and disrupt the meaning of utterances. He notes that the researchers

point out that local errors involve noun and verb inflections, and the use of articles, prepositions, and auxiliaries. But global errors involve wrong word order in a sentence. So, errors can be said to be the result of incomplete knowledge. But mistakes are made by a learner when writing or speaking and are inattentive, tired, carelessness. They conclude that errors are grammatically incorrect forms that occur in writing or speaking, as a result of incomplete learning or knowledge of grammatical rules of the language and cannot be self-corrected by oneself but mistakes or lapses are socially inappropriate forms that happen because of lack of attention, fatigue and carelessness and can be self-corrected.

Corder (1967) cited in Botley (2015) asserts that errors serve three important functions: they inform teachers about what has been learned and what has not been learned, they help researchers to understand how languages are learned, and finally they help learners to discover the rules of the language they are trying to master, by means of feedback. The findings of this study will give the researcher a firm knowledge on what has been learned by the learners and what has not been learned to find possible ways of helping them to overcome their concord errors. It will also help other researchers understand how languages are learned based on the findings of the analysis made on the causes of the pupils' errors committed.

## **2.2 Error and Mistake**

Error and mistake are considered to be synonymous. However, Corder (1967) considers „performance slip“ as „mistake“ and the term „error (competence)“ for the „semantic ones“ for L2 learning. Brown (1941) agrees with Corder by indicating that a mistake is a performance error that is either a random guess or a „slip“ in that, it is a failure to correctly utilize a known system. Corder (1967) throws more light on his definition by saying that an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of

a native speaker and it reflects the competence of the learner. And to Habibullah (2010) mistake can be self-corrected by a native speaker, but errors cannot be self-corrected. Errors are the result of incomplete knowledge and mistakes are made by a learner when they are writing or speaking and are caused by lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or some other aspect performance (Botley, 2015, p. 83). The distinction between errors and mistakes was summed up by James (1998) cited in Botley (2015) which says that errors can be defined as systematic deviations from the rules of a target language, as they are believed to occur because a learner does not know a given rule or feature, such as subject-verb agreement or noun plurality in English.

Errors might arise from little or no input on a given language feature during language lessons. Mistakes, on the other hand, are usually seen as unintentional, accidental slips resulting from simple laziness or forgetting, or insufficiently internalized rules. If a learner makes a mistake, he or she will normally be capable of correcting it, because of awareness of the rule that has been broken. On the other hand, errors cannot be self-corrected by the learner because the rule being broken is not part of the learner's knowledge of the target language. From the various explanations given, one can conclude that errors are grammatically incorrect forms that occur in writing or speaking because of the incomplete learning or knowledge of grammatical rules of language and cannot be self-corrected, but mistakes or lapses are socially inappropriate forms that happen because of lack of attention, fatigue and carelessness and can be self-corrected. Botley (2015) indicates that the difficulty in clearly defining and delineating errors and mistakes provides a challenge for those who aim to investigate both Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and how effectively language educators teach a new language, because understanding what goes wrong when learners communicate in a target language reflects not only their



nascent knowledge of the language's rules, but also offers direct evidence of how well they have learned, and how well they have been taught.

### **2.3 Causes of Concord Errors**

A lot of factors come into play when it comes to committing errors. Some of the factors are explicit, while others are implicit. Linguists have presented a lot of causes of some of these errors. These causes form the main reasons behind some of the errors committed by learners of second language. James (1998 as cited in Heydari et al, 2012:1585)) states that there are four causes of errors: They are:

#### ***2.3.1 Interlingual causes***

These kinds of errors are influenced by the native languages which interfere with target language learning.

#### ***2.3.2 Intralingual causes***

These types of errors are caused by the target language itself like: false analogy, misanalysis (learners form a wrong hypothesis), incomplete rule application, (this is the converse of overgeneralization or one might call it under generalization as the learners do not use all the rules), exploiting redundancy (this error occurs by carrying considerable redundancy). This is shown throughout the system in the form of unnecessary morphology and double signalling), overlooking co-occurrence restrictions (caused by overlooking the exceptional rules), hypercorrection or monitor overuse (due to learners' over cautious and strict observance of rules) and overgeneralization or system simplification (caused by the misuse of words or grammatical rules).

#### ***2.3.3 Communication strategy-based errors***

These errors are subdivided into the holistic strategies or approximation and analytic strategies.

#### **2.3.4 Context of learning**

These errors are the result of being misled by the way in which the teachers give definitions, examples, explanations and arrange practice opportunities. These errors are mostly caused by the teaching and learning process. Touchie (1986, pp. 77-78) also discusses the following as the causes of some errors:

#### **2.3.5 Simplification**

This is where second language learners choose simple forms and constructions instead of more complex ones. He gave an example of simplification as the use of simple present instead of the present perfect continuous.

#### **2.3.6 Overgeneralization**

This is the use of one form or construction in one context and extending its application to other contexts where it should not apply. He states that overgeneralization include the use of *corned* and *goed* as the past tense forms of *corne* and *go* and the omission of the third person singular *s* under the heavy pressure of all other endless forms. He indicates that simplification and overgeneralization are used by learners in order to reduce their linguistic burden.

#### **2.3.7 Hypercorrection**

This is where the zealous efforts of teachers in correcting their students' errors induce the students to make errors in otherwise correct forms.

#### **2.3.8 Faulty teaching**

These errors are teacher-induced ones, thus, they are caused by the teacher, teaching materials, or the order of presentation. That notwithstanding, some teachers are also influenced by their pupils' errors in the course of long teaching.

### 2.3.9 Avoidance

This happens when some syntactic structures are difficult to produce by some learners which consequently make these second language learners avoid these structures and use simpler structures instead.

### 2.3.10 Inadequate learning

This is mainly caused by ignorance of rule restrictions or under-differentiation and incomplete learning. An example is omission of the third person singular -s as in: He *like* gospel music, instead of he *likes* gospel music.

### 2.3.11 False concepts hypothesized

Many learners' errors can be attributed to wrong hypotheses formed by these learners about the target language. For example, some learners think that *is* is the marker of the present tense. So, they produce: He *is* talk to the teacher. Similarly, they think that *was* is the past tense marker. Hence they say: It *was* happened last night.

## 2.4 The Notion of Concord

Crystal (1988, p. 50) states that, “concord or agreement is a way of showing that two grammatical units have a certain feature in common”. That means the two grammatical units show common feature in either number, person, gender or case.

Examples:

### **Agreement in number and person**

- i. He is in the room. (singular subject, singular verb)
- ii. You are in the room. (plural subject, plural verb).

Examples: **Agreement in gender**

- i. Abigail failed her exams.
- ii. The headmistress gave us her contact.

Examples: **Agreement in case**

- i. We met that teacher today. (Nominative)

ii. The headteacher sacked us home. (Objective)

iii. I met my uncle at the bank today. (Possessive)

Wiredu(1999,p.110) shares the same opinion as he states that, “the term concord in English grammar is used to refer to agreement relations that exist between two grammatical units so that, when one unit displays a particular feature, the other unit will also display a similar feature”. Robins (1971, p. 235) in a similar vein sees concord as: the requirement that the forms of two or more words of specific word classes that stand in specific syntactic relationship share with each other, and they can also be characterized by the same paradigmatically marked category (or categories).

Examples: **Paradigmatically marked to show number and person.**

i. I read always.

ii. She reads always.

iii. We read always.

Examples: **Paradigmatically marked to show tense and aspect**

i. Mrs.Nortey cooks delicious meals for her family. (simple present)

ii. Mrs.Nortey cooked a delicious meal for her family. (simple past)

iii. Mrs.Nortey will cook a delicious meal for her family. (simple future)

According to Warriner’s et al (1973, p. 112), certain words that are closely related in sentences have matching forms. Subjects and verbs have this kind of close relationship, as do pronouns and their antecedents. When such words are correctly matched, we say they agree grammatically.

Examples:

i. My father, along with two other officials, often hires applicants.

ii. These books are too old.

iii. A lot of us have paid your fees already.

They give the two examples beneath to illustrate that there is **lack of agreement** between the words that are closely related.

- i. “He don”
- ii. “One of the girls forgot their book”? (Warriner et al, 1973, p. 112)

Several other approaches were taken in treating the concept concord: Quirk, et al (1972, pp. 359-371) look at (concord) under the sentence. Other grammarians e.g. Opdycke (1965, pp. 236-254) treat it under Coherence and Unity; Vivian and Jackson (1961:283-293) discuss it under Grammatical Relationship; Hopper et al (1974, pp. 61-84) discuss concord under Logic and Clarity; while Hockett (1958, pp. 214-218) looks at it under Kinds of Syntactic Linkages. The definitions of concords by Grammarians are not relevant to the present study. This is because the sole aim of this study is to rather analyze the concord errors in the scripts of the JHS 2 pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic 'A' and 'B' Schools and not to treat the concept of concord.

## **2.5 Types of Concord**

Concord in English grammar has many rules governing its usage. But these rules have been consolidated under four broad categories. Namely: Grammatical Concord, Notional Concord, Tense Concord and Proximity Concord. Let’s take a look at them one by one.

### **2.5.1 Grammatical concord**

Long (2007, p. 606) argues that “for sentence to make sense, subjects and verbs have to agree with each other...”. She goes on to assert that issues about subject-verb agreement are relevant basic skills which every students must strive to acquire. Example.

#### **a) Agreement of noun with verb**

The verb must agree with the subject (noun) in number and person

Examples:

- i. I am in the room. (singular subject, singular verb)
- ii. You are in the garden. (plural subject, plural verb)
- iii. Padma is beautiful. (singular subject, singular verb)

Leech and Svartvik (2002, p. 273) state that a pronoun which refers back to a singular noun phrase is in singular, and a pronoun which refers back to plural noun phrase is in plural. Warriner's et al (1973, pp. 112-125) also share a similar view that there should always be agreement between the pronoun and its antecedent. Examples:

**i. Agreement in number and gender**

- i. Doreen polished her shoes.
- ii. Our currency has lose its value.
- iii. The policeman lost his phone.

**ii. Agreement when the antecedent of a personal pronoun is another kind of pronoun**

- i. One of the pupils in my class has lost his/her terminal report card.
- ii. Everyone of the girls is interested in her own progress.

**2.5.2 Notional concord**

Notional concord is a type of semantic agreement between the headnoun of a phrase of a sentence or clause whose form is singular, but the meaning involves plurality. Thus, more than one element or entity. With notional concord, agreement is based on the notion, idea, or number rather than on the actual presence of the grammatical or formal marker of such a notion. Anything relating to an amount of money, time, distance and measurement is perceived as a whole entity, hence a singular form of a verb must be chosen to agree with it (Murthy, 2005). Crystal (2004, p. 75) also states that notional concord focuses on the meaning of the whole entity.

Collective nouns are a class of notional concord. Littel (1992) describes collective noun as a singular noun that refers to a group of people or things, hence requires a singular verb to agree with it. A contrary view is that, the context in which a collective noun has been used determines whether a singular or plural verb should be chosen to agree with it. That is, if the noun is taken as a unit, then a singular verb will be used but if the members in the group are seen as separate entities then a plural verb will be used Examples:

**Plural nouns denoting quantity/amount/distance/time must be used with a singular verb**

- i. Seventy kilograms of rice is enough for the family.
- ii. Ten miles is too long a distance to walk.
- iii. Forty minutes is enough for this exercise.

**A collective noun treated as a singular unit must take singular verb and one which is treated as separate individuals must take plural verb.** Examples:

- i. The ship's crew has saved the drowning passenger.
- ii. The crew were warmly welcomed on arrival.

### **2.5.3 Tense concord**

Yule (2014, pp. 58-59) observes that “the basic tense distinction in English is marked by only two forms of the verb, the past tense and the present tense. He adds that the present tense form ties the situation described closely to the situation of the utterance. He refers to the present tense as non-remote and the past tense form remote, because the past tense form makes the situation described more remote from the situation of the utterance. He indicates that future events are not treated as facts; they are only possibilities and are distinguished in terms of being non-remote possibilities versus remote possibilities”. Examples:

- i. I lived there then. (simple past)
- ii. I live here now. (simple present)
- iii. It may rain later. (future aspect)

Murthy (2005, p. 151) indicates that “tense is a term used in grammar to indicate the time of the action or event”. He indicates that in any language, tense is divided into three classes, which are: present tense, past tense and future tense. This view is contrary to what Yule (2014) thinks about the number of tenses we have in English. Murthy defines the various tenses as these:

1. Present Tense: When a verb is used to show that an action takes place at present, it is known as the Present Tense.

Examples: i. He *speaks* English well.

ii. We *are* fond of music.

iii. It *rains* today (Murthy, 2005, p. 151)

2. Past Tense: When a verb is used to show that an action was completed, it is known as the Past Tense.

Examples: i. It *was* hot yesterday..

ii. I *spoke* to her for two hours.

iii. They *stayed* in a hotel for a week. (Murthy, 2005, p. 151)

3. Future Tense: When a verb is used to show that an action will take place in the future, it is known as the Future Tense.

Examples: i. They *will send* us a telegram.

ii. He *will go* to Accra tomorrow.

iii. I *shall teach* you Hindi. (Murthy, 2005, p. 151)



#### 2.5.4 Proximity concord

Proximity means nearness in distance or time, whereas concord simply means subject-verb agreement. (Retrieved from: <https://hosbeg.com/proximity>). The principle of proximity denotes agreement of verb with the head word. Quirk and Greenbaum (2000) indicate that the principle of proximity has to do with an agreement between the verb and whatever noun or pronoun closely preceding it or the headword of the subject. Example:

Neither *the headteachers* nor *the secretary* comes here everyday.

In this sentence, per one of the principles of proximity, '*secretary*' is taken as the subject of the sentence since it immediately precedes the verb. However, there are different rules governing the use of proximity concord.

Here are few of them:

**a)** *If a sentence is made of two clauses and the subject in the main clause (singular or plural) is accompanied by any of these intervening phrases: together with, in association with, in addition to, like, as much as, with, including, in collaboration with, along with, rather than, as well as, or no less than, the nouns in the intervening phrases do not control the sentence, instead, it is the headnoun (referent) in the main clause that determines the form of the verb to agree with it. Gogovi et al (2005) call these intervening expressions Pseudo conjunctions because they are not true conjunctions, and so cannot connect two subjects together to make them plural.*

Examples:

- i. Jane *like her sisters* hates stealing.
- ii. My parents *with the trader* sell every Monday evening.

b) Leech and Svartvik (2002) state in their discussion on coordinated or compound subjects that if a subject consists of two or more nouns or noun phrases coordinated or joined by *and*, the verb must be in a plural form.

Examples:

- i. My mother and her brother have travelled abroad last night.
- ii. Benedict and Boniface are my nephews.
- iii. The principals and their assistants were awarded by the board of governors

c) The principle of attraction comes in where subjects that are connected by correlative pairs (*either... or, neither... nor, not only ...but also etc*) are disjunctive subjects, that is, if they differ in number and in person. In such instances, the rule says that the number of verb is determined by the number of the last noun phrase (the closer or closest noun to the verb). Examples:

- i. Neither my parents nor my brother knows my whereabouts.
- ii. Either you or the teachers know my whereabouts.

### 2.5.5 Summary

This part of the study discusses the rules governing concord under the four consolidated broad categories (Grammatical Concord, Notional Concord, Tense Concord, and Proximity Concord) from the perspective of different scholars as well as some causes of concord errors.

### 2.6 Possible Areas of Concord Errors

Crystal (1988, p. 50) states that, “concord or agreement is a way of showing that two grammatical units have a certain feature in common”. That means the two grammatical units show common feature in number, person, gender or case. This rule is being conflicted by the numerous rules that govern the use of proximity concord and notional concord which were discussed earlier. These conflicting rules at times

confuse learners of second language and they end up committing certain errors as the ones indicated.

### **2.6.1 Typical developmental errors**

These errors show that the learner is still in the process of learning the rules of the target language and has not fully grasped the rules of the target language. These errors occur when the learner attempt to build up hypothesis about the target language on the basis of limited experience. Richards (1971) calls errors of this nature „developmental errors“. This type of error is mostly seen in the learner“s attempt to refer to actions in the simple past by using adverb of time to indicate instead of inflecting the verb into the past tense. Examples:

- i. We eat „banku“ *yesterday*.
- ii. I sweep the classroom *already*.

### **2.6.2 Notional concord errors**

Yankson (1994, p. 3) states that notional concord is the agreement according to the notion or idea that the speaker or writer has, and usually, notional concord rules are applied to notions that are conceived as collective nouns. This rule always causes confusion in the minds of the second language learners as it comes into conflict with the subject-verb agreement rule which strictly maintains that the subject and the verb must agree in number and not how it is conceived by the speaker. This error also occurs sometimes because learners cannot distinguish between words which are collective nouns and those that are not. They end up using words which are not collective nouns as if they are. Examples;

- i. The church have been task to win souls for Jesus.
- ii. The school have a big role to play in an individual“s life.

From the examples above, it is evident that the noun phrases; *The church* and *The school* were mistaken to be collective nouns, and per one of the rules governing the use of collective nouns, the speaker who made these utterances has individual churches and schools in mind, hence considered each of the noun phrases as plural and assigned plural verbs to them in order to agree.

### 2.6.3 Proximity concord errors

Proximity means nearness in distance or time, whereas concord simply means subject-verb agreement. (Retrieved from: <https://hosbeg.com/proximity>). The principle of proximity denotes agreement of verb with the head word. However, there are several rules governing the use of proximity concord. These rules sometimes get the pupils confused as they are sometimes torn between where to apply which rule. Let's take a look at few of these rules drawn from, „*Contemporary English Grammar*“ by Murthy (2005, p. 25-26):

a) *Two or more singular nouns connected by „and“ must be used with a plural verb.*

Example: Smoking and drinking are injurious to health.

b) *Two singular nouns suggesting one idea or person must be used with a singular verb.*

Examples: i. The author and reporter is my classmate.

ii. Slow and steady wins a race.

c) *Nouns joined by „or“ or „nor“ differing in person, the verb must agree with the nearest noun.*

Example: *Either she* or I am very serious about the issue.

d) *“Either/neither/each/everyone/one” + „of“ + plural noun and the phrase „many a“ must be used with a singular verb.*

Examples: i. Each of the students is given a text book.

ii. Many a politician has bribed someone before.

e) *Two nouns qualified by „each“ or „every“ and connected by „and“ must be used with a singular verb.*

Examples: i. Each actor and actress is very popular.

ii. Each poem and story of mine was published.

f) *When two subjects connected by „or“ or „nor“ differ in number, the verb must agree with the subject nearest to it.*

Examples: i. *Either the girl or the parents are* to be blamed.

ii. *Either the parents or the girl is* to be blamed.

These, plus several other rules governing the use of proximity concord often times confuse second language learners, leading to misapplication of rules, which eventually leads to committing proximity concord errors.

#### **2.6.4 Memory limitation concord errors**

This type of concord error is as a result of constructions being too long. If noun phrases serving as subjects of sentences are too long, majority of learners easily lose focus on the exact noun phrase serving as the subject of the sentence to enter into agreement with the verb due to short memory span. Example:

i. This current generation of students who *don“t*(doesn“t) know it pays to be humble, level shoulders with everybody.

Because the noun phrase serving as the subject of the sentence is too long, the pupils took *students* which is plural, instead of *this current generation* which is singular to be the subject of the sentence. Hence chose *don“t* instead of *doesn“t*.

#### **2.6.5 Omission of the /-s/ factor**

In English, all grammatical persons do not take an “-s” ending in the verbs, except the third person singular in the present tense, as a result, most students often

drop the “-s” ending because they consider it as a redundant feature. Errors of this nature are caused by false concept hypothesis. Learners who committed these errors might be operating on their background knowledge on the morphological structure of singular nouns in English, hence try to establish subject-verb agreement between the two grammatical units by maintaining the morphological form (structure) of the verb by not inflecting, thinking that rather makes the verb singular in order to have the subject and the verb agree, forgetting a verb in the base form is rather plural. Yankson (1994) describes this kind of error as intralingual error. He indicates that such an error has nothing to do with mother tongue interference. Examples:

- i. The headteacher like caning more than even the teachers.
- ii. The boy like crying.

#### **2.6.6 Inability to identify headword**

These errors are attributed to the inability of the learners to identify the headword of a string of words acting as subject. The head or headword is the most prominent element of a string of words. Learners who have properly internalized subject-verb concord rules have no problem matching subjects such as nominal group (a noun or pronoun), it is easier for learners to let the simple subject agree with its verb in the present tense. However, there are instances where the subject is a complex one. A complex subject can be a noun phrase with a multiple pre-modification and post modification. Pre-modifiers precede their heads. A complex subject poses problems because learners are unable to identify the headword which should enter into agreement relationship with the verb, because of the presence of other nouns in the environment of the noun headword. The rule should not change if the subject is simple or complex. Thus, if the head is singular, the verb in the present tense should be singular and if the head is plural, so does the verb. Sometimes, there may be a

prepositional phrases or an adverb between the subject and the verb. This should not affect the headword in number, person or gender. Examples

- i. *The reason* for its fall in these areas are (*is*) not far-fetched.
- ii. *A long discussion* on the way of the colonists take (*takes*) place.

In the examples, it is apparent that the students could not identify the headwords or the subjects of the two sentences. As a result, they ignorantly selected the noun closer to the verb as the subject as underlined in each of the sentences above, as against the correct ones in italics. The present researcher is of the view that the components of a noun phrase and other words that can function as the subject of a sentence should be properly taught in school. If enough time is spent on teaching the components of a noun phrase such as the headword and modifiers, students would be aware of the headword which will assist them in determining the appropriate corresponding verb.

#### 2.6.7 Summary

The possible causes of concord errors were discussed over here. The discussion was centred on typical developmental errors, Notional concord errors, Proximity concord errors, Memory limitation concord errors, Omission of the /-s/factor, and Headword- verb concord errors.

#### 2.7 Importance of Errors in Teaching and Learning of English Language

Different views exist on what constitutes a *linguistic error* and on how it should be treated within an L2 learning or usage frame. As previously discussed language transfer has always been a central issue in applied linguistics. *Language transfer* may occur either in the acquisition procedure or during language use between speakers who do not share the same language but need to communicate effectively. Language transfer should necessarily be viewed through the perspective of an

error. Two types of transfer exist; positive and negative. Positive transfer takes place when the speaker's mother tongue and the L2 have similarities in structure and other elements that gradually lead to socio-linguistically "correct" language use, both written and spoken, and comprehension. Negative transfer is the transfer of structures from the mother tongue to the target language in a way that does not conform to the latter's rules. In this case, the influence of the mother tongue on the L2 of the speaker is often considered as a source of errors.

In negative transfer, speakers may or may not be aware of the fact that they mix language structures and elements as a result of mother tongue transfer effects. *Conscious transfer* is mostly related to the lack of certain linguistic skills. It may also be the result of the speaker having forgotten or falsely understood structure, form and certain concepts. *Unconscious transfer* takes place when non-native speakers cannot distinguish clearly the difference between structures and rules of the two languages, mother tongue and L2. In both cases, the so-called "errors" may result to misconceptions in communication. However, if communication is effectively achieved transfer effects may be overlooked.

Throughout the years, the importance attributed to language follows the historical trends and theories on L2 teaching and learning. In the 1950s it was considered as an important factor of the learning process. Negative transfer was mostly highlighted. According to Kesharvaz (1994), language learners' errors were severely criticized by well-known linguists of that era and it was strictly emphasized that L2 errors should be avoided and, in case of occurrence, corrected at all costs as they were considered dire. In the 1960s they had already lost much of their importance and impact since newer L2 approaches regarded learners' errors as fully



acceptable and treated them as part of a creative process towards the achievement of linguistic perfection and communicative meaning.

In relation to the communicate approach in language learning, a more balanced perspective has emerged according to which language transfer and the respective errors are seriously considered as important linguistic elements that can't be avoided nor criticized. Errors are no longer seen as signs of failure that have to be prevented and eradicated, but are rather considered as signs of developmental processes involved in the learning of language and Corder ( 1967) adds to this:

Errors are significant in three different ways. Firstly, to the teacher, in that they tell him, if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. Secondly, they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language. Thirdly, they are indispensable to the learner himself, because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn. It is a way the learner has for testing his/her hypotheses about the nature of the language he/she is learning.

According to Richards (1971) the study of errors made by language learners is significant in the following principles:

Linguistics, because the study of human language can lead to discoveries on what constitutes human intelligence.

- Psycholinguistics, because the study of children's speech and its comparison with that of adults can reveal mental processes involved in language.
- Teaching, because it enables the discovery, identification, and analysis of learner mistakes as well as the design of appropriate methods for their mitigation.

Corder (1967) argues that errors provide evidence of how language is learnt. They serve as tools through which the learner discovers the rules of the target language. In summary, it may be argued that learners' errors should not necessarily be considered significant problems and obstacles in the context of learning a second language; rather they can be viewed as natural elements to be dealt with through appropriate processes. In light of recent open and communicative approaches to language learning, errors are tolerated if communicative goals are achieved and the central points of communication are not altered.

## **2.8 Related Studies**

Studies have been conducted on L2 learners' concord use errors in most parts of the world. The findings of these studies indicate varying degrees of concord errors made by learners across the proficiency levels. These include secondary schools and tertiary level of education. A brief review of some of these studies shows that both complimentary and conflicting results were found out. Only previous studies related to this study were reviewed. Akoh (1989) carried out a research on concord errors of ten NCE, Geography teachers in post primary schools in Zaria. She found out that at the grammatical category, error of word clause ranked highest with 42.5%, while, monotonous use of lexical and additive connective were observed. She attributed the likely causes of the grammatical errors to mother-tongue interference, faulty teaching, overgeneralization of target language rules, and fossilization of wrongly learned language materials. She used written essay as instrument to collect the data to identify the sources of the errors and it was successful. Therefore, the current study totally agrees with the instrument and adopted it in the study. However, this study differs slightly from Akoh's (1989) study, thus the current study is conducted on Junior High School Students while the other was conducted on N.C.E geography teachers in post

primary schools in Zaria. So there is the likelihood that developmental errors will be on a low in the former's study unlike it is in this study because the respondents are still at the early stage of the second language learning process.

Ruin (1996) also conducts a study on subject-verb concord errors in the essay and translation test of students. The population for his study is 345 respondents. However, he discovered that fewer S/V concord errors were found in essays than in the translations tests. According to Ruin, there were fewer errors in the essays because the students use simpler sentence structures and thus avoid the more difficult ones that can cause errors. The current study agrees more with Ruin in that, in the analysis done on the concord errors in the written essays of the respondents, not much was seen on proximity concord errors, but in the objective test, proximity concord errors recorded the highest occurrence. This confirms Ruin's findings that learners employ avoidance tactics to swerve difficult areas on concord types in their writings.

Similarly, Edwin (1989) conducted a study to examine the errors made by Form 4 Students in their written essays in some selected secondary schools in Malaysia. The population is 8658 students and the data obtained were first tabulated based on rural and urban schools and were combined under the following headings: subject verb agreement, verb forms, future progressive, current perfect, past progressive, past perfect, passive, prepositions, and plurality. It was revealed that the percentage of errors for rural students was much higher in most of the above categories. In the combined results, verb forms recorded highest with present tense concord errors recording 80% followed by past progressive with 75%. The current research work differs from Edwin's (1989) study in that, the current study is carried out on Form Two Junior High School Students of two schools in Ghana, but that of the former was carried out on Form Four students in selected secondary schools in

Malaysia. Also, in the current study, the data collected will not be tabulated based on schools location as it was done in Edwin's study.

In another study, Thagg-Fisher (1985) based her study on the analysis of concord errors of Swedish learners of English produced in their translation and composition test. It was found out that concord error density does not differ in spoken and non-creative text production (Thagg-Fisher, 1985). Concord errors in translation texts are dependent on the choice of words and sentence structure in the source text. Swedish learners of English can avoid making concord errors in creative text production (Thagg-Fisher, 1985). The study has a population of 267 Swedish L2 learners of English. The study also found out that learners make errors or mistakes owing to the one's principle, which has to do with the finals of the singular noun (e.g. measles, ethics). The „s“ may be misinterpreted as the plural morpheme. Swedish learners of English have problems considering irregular and unmarked plural nouns, when plural nouns lack the regular –s morpheme, Swedes tend to make concord errors.

Moreover, Swedes have to know whether the noun is regarded holistically (as one entity) or atomistically (as members making up a group) as concord. But, it depends on whether a collective noun is regarded as a single undivided body or a collection of individuals (Thagg-Fisher, 1985). Pronouns are difficult as well; sentences with, everybody, every, none, some and each can trigger concord errors (Thagg-Fisher, 1985). The current study agrees more with Thagg-Fisher's finding because such factors pose concord problems to respondents of this study. However, the current study differs slightly from Thagg-Fisher's research work in the following ways: first, the current study is centred on Form Two Junior High School Students. On the other hand, Fisher's study was carried out on Swedish learners of English.

Second, the current study is based on the concord error structural test; select options in objective test items on concord types and concord errors in written essay test as against translation and composition test in Thagg-Fisher's method. Third, the current study indicates the types of concord errors to cover but Thagg-Fisher's work failed to indicate the types of concord errors that the study is expected to cover.

Kohlmyr (2001) investigates subject-verb concord of Swedish L2 learners of English. He discovered that the most common problem for Swedish learners of English is when the subject is a personal pronoun. There are two types of concord errors; either the subject, requires the verb to take the 3rd person singular-s or it does not. He used a population of 153 respondents and questionnaire as instrument for the study which differs from the tool used by this study. The current study differs from Kohlmyr's (2001) study in that, this study's scope of concord is wider unlike his that was centered on just subject-verb concord.

Levin (2001) carries out a study on analysis of distance concord errors of students and used a population of 169 students in Yamude School. He found out that when there is a long distance between the subject and the predicate, it is difficult to remember the number of the subject (Levin, 2001). Also, agreement errors become more frequent when personal pronouns occur in other clauses than their subjects/controller. When a pronoun appears in another sentence than its controller, it is more likely to produce plural concord than if both items appeared in the same clause (Levin, 2001). This study shares the same view with Levin's on his first findings but differs from his second findings.

Akrong (2008) also carries a study entitled „Correcting Students' Concord Errors“. His study is more concerned about new strategies to be adopted in teaching to enhance the performance of students in Senior High Schools. He also recommended

that pronouns should be taught better and properly in Ghanaian schools so that students can identify their subject and object forms and can relate the subject forms to the appropriate verbs. This study buys in the recommendations put forward by Akrong. Similarly, Arthur (2009) also examined concord teaching at junior high schools. She considered the various methods teachers of English use to teach subject-verb agreement in the junior high school. She found out that most of the teachers use the right methodologies; however, these teachers need to employ more techniques at the various stages of their lesson presentations for pupils to get better understanding of the topic. According to her, most pupils have difficulties in applying the rules of concord in their compositions, but then when it comes to objectives tests, they are able to select the correct form of the verb to match the correct subject.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

This chapter discusses literature review as it relates to concord problems in English language. The review was done on the following themes: the concept of error, errors and mistakes, the concept of concord, types of concord, and possible areas of concord errors, importance of errors and review of related literature. The next chapter discusses the methodology of the study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to analyze concord errors among the JHS 2 pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic 'A' and 'B' Schools in the Ningo-Prampram district of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. To achieve this objective, and effectively achieve the specific objectives, the researcher took several steps that formed the research methodology. Methodology, according to Polit and Beck (2004), has to do with the ways of obtaining, systematizing and analyzing data. And to Bowling (2002), it has to do with the complete structure of the research study, the sample size, sampling methods, practices and the techniques utilized to collect data and the process of analyzing the data. This chapter presents a detailed description of the various steps that were taken by the researcher during the course of the study. Where necessary, the reason or reasons why such steps were taken are accounted for by the researcher. The chapter discusses the research design, population and sample size, sampling techniques, data collection procedure and tools, data analysis and ethical consideration.

#### 3.1 Research Design

A research design can be defined as a framework that has been created by a researcher to guide the process of conducting a research (Bilau et al, 2018; Brannen, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Nardi, 2018). Put differently, a research design can be seen as a framework created by the researcher for use in finding answers to the research questions (Cuervo-Cazurra, Mudambi, Pedersen & Piscitello, 2017). In most cases, the research design indicates whether the findings of a research are valid or not (Cuervo-Cazurra, Mudambi, Pedersen & Piscitello, 2017; Nardi, 2018). The main

purpose for coming out with a research design is to ensure that the appropriate data that can be used to answer the research questions are collected (Brannen, 2017; Bilau et al, 2018; Nardi, 2018). It is also to ensure that such data are collected from the appropriate group of people using data gathering instruments that are appropriate for that purpose (Cuervo-Cazurra, Mudambi, Pedersen & Piscitello, 2017; Nardi, 2018). Finally, the research design is also expected to ensure that the data collected is analyzed in the most appropriate manner (Brannen, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The research design employed for this study was descriptive because it is a contextual study. Descriptive measurements were to a large extent utilized as a part of the research to determine the realities and discoveries of the study. The researcher therefore used objective and written essay tests to collect data from the appropriate respondents, analyzed the data and presented the findings using charts and tables. The specific steps taken by the researcher during these processes are discussed later in this chapter.

### **3.2 Population and Sampling**

The population of a research refers to the total number of elements that could provide the kind of information needed by a researcher in order to answer research questions (Ary, Jacobs, Irvine & Walker, 2018; Nardi, 2018; Chow, Shao Wang & Lokhnygina, 2018). This group of elements usually possesses specific characteristics or knowledge or other attributes that enable them to provide the kind of information the researcher needs. Best & Kahn (2006) share similar thoughts as they define population as a group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common and is of interest to the researcher. The importance of identifying the appropriate population dwells on the fact that it determines the validity and reliability of the findings of the study (Marczyk et al, 2017; Yin, 2017).



The population of this study is made up of JHS 2 pupils of two different schools; Ayetepa D/A Basic „A“ and „B“. All the pupils from the JHS 2 classes were to be used; thus 45 pupils from Basic 'A' and 30 pupils from Basic 'B'. Such decision was taken because quantitative research lends itself with the collection of larger amount of data for detailed analysis (Anastas, 1999). The choice of JHS 2 pupils as the target population of the study was appropriate because, first it will test the pupils' ability to recall what they had been taught on concord in JHS One. Secondly, the fact that the JHS 2 pupils have one whole year more to prepare for their Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) is enough to help correct the errors which will be identified after the research was done before they sit for their BECE. More so, the fact that a pass in English Language is a requirement for admission into any Senior High School calls for adequate preparation, hence the choice of JHS 2 pupils over the JHS 1 and JHS 3 pupils because the JHS 3 pupils have barely a year to complete, this makes it inappropriate. The JHS 1 pupils on the other hand have more years to complete, so there is the need to choose the JHS 2 pupils over them.

### **3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

Researchers are usually unable to collect data from the entire members of their population (Chow et al, 2018; Marczy et al, 2017; Yin, 2017). This is usually the case because, the members of the population are either too many for data to be collected from all of them, or they are spread out on a very wide geographical area where the researcher could not have access to all of them during the time period available for the study (Etikan, Musaand Alkassim, 2016; Creswell and Creswell, 2017; Ary, Jacobs, Irvine and Walker, 2018; Nardi, 2018; Chow et al, 2018). Thus, in most instances, researchers collect data from what is known as the sample of the population (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Etikan et al, 2016; Marczyk et al, 2017). As the name suggests, the

sample refers to part of the population whose views could be assumed to be a reflection of the views of the entire population (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Marczyk et al, 2017; Yin, 2017). The needed data were therefore collected from the sample for analysis.

The total number of elements (people, animals, objects or events) who form the sample is known as the sample size (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Yin, 2017). Usually, the sample size is determined using one of several methods taking into account several factors (Etikan, et al, 2016; Marczyk et al, 2017; Yin, 2017). Since the total number of the population of this study was drawn from two different schools; thus Ayetepa Basic 'A' and 'B', but of the same class, the researcher deemed it appropriate to sample thirty (30) respondents from each of the two classes from the two different schools in order to have an even representation and also because this study intended to generalize the results of the findings to save resources since it was a peculiar problem with all the pupils.

Due to the fact that the sample is meant to be a representative of the entire population, researchers usually adopt a specific method in selecting the members of the sample (Moradi et al, 2015; Castillo et al, 2016). The method adopted by a researcher in selecting the sample of a study is known as the sampling technique (Castillo et al, 2016; Ghoshdastidar & Dukkupati, 2018). The sampling technique used in selecting the members of the population, in many ways, influences the credibility of the final findings of a study. Because this study's target population is centred on two different groups of pupils; thus Ayetepa Basic 'A' and 'B' with different number strengths; thus 30 and 45, the researcher decided to employ a simple random sampling method to get an even number to have an even representation from the target population. Since Ayetepa Basic 'B's' population is thirty (30), there is the need to

sample Ayetepa Basic 'A' whose population was forty-five(45) to 30 in order to get a fair representation of the two schools. Basic 'B' representatives were not sampled since their total number was 30 but Basic 'A' representatives were sampled down to 30 using random sampling which lends itself with restrictions in order to limit researcher's choice of sample. In sampling them, 45 pieces of papers were cut and 30 of them had 'yes' written on them and 15 of them had 'no' written on them. All the 45 pupils had the chance to pick a piece of paper each. The 30 who picked 'yes' were made to represent Basic „A“ thereby giving an even number of representatives for both schools.

### **3.4 Data Collection Instrument**

In an attempt to collect information from the respondents (sample members), researchers usually adopt certain ways or means (McCarthy et al, 2017; Veal; 2017). The means through which a researcher collects data from the members of the population is known as the data collection instrument. The instrument used in this study was test: multiple objective test and written essay test. A total of 30 objective test items and one written essay test were administered to sixty (60) respondents sampled from JHS 2 pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic 'A' and 'B' Schools (see appendix for sample of the questions administered). The choice of that data collecting instrument was influenced by the fact that the researcher intended to test competence coupled with the fact that those instruments gave the researcher flexibility to cover different types of concord and that provided reliable information of the respondents knowledge of concord in the English language.

#### **3.4.1 Test (objective/subjective)**

A test is a way of measuring a person's ability, knowledge or performance in a specific domain (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). This research adopted test as the

data collection instrument to measure the pupils' performance in concord. Both objective test and written essay test were administered to identify the particular concord error types the pupils were having problems in. Thirty objective test items and one written essay test were administered. The objective test items were spread to cover various concord error types like; Indefinite pronoun concord, proximity concord, grammatical concord, Pronoun-antecedent/relative pronoun concord, notional concord and collective nouns concord.

### **3.5 Validity**

There is the need to ensure that when the instrument or the sample procedure is replicated, similar results would be achieved. In such regards, validity of the study is a major concern. For the purposes of validity of the instrument, a drafted copy was given to the supervisor and two other English language teachers for face and content validity. A final copy was printed after the supervisor's approval and the other teachers' advice and inputs. The approach for ensuring validity is consistent with that of Sani (2016) who conducted a similar study in Nigeria.

### **3.6 Trustworthiness**

According to De Vos et al (2005), the trustworthiness of a measurement procedure is the stability or consistency of the measurement which is seen if the same variable measured under the same conditions produces identical (or nearly identical) measurements. In order to guarantee the credibility of the study, the researcher piloted the test in an effort to identify possible problems regarding its. Bless et al (2006) note that piloting is useful to the researcher because it reveals potential areas of challenges with the approach or resource materials. It also assists with the determination of the correctness and relevance of any research instrument developed. For this study, the piloting was conducted with 15 JHS 3 pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic 'A' who were

found within the prescribed research settings. However, these participants were not included in the current study. The purpose was to evaluate the instrument's capacity and appropriateness to collect the desired data (Caspar & Peytcheva, 2011). The test was conducted by the researcher under examination conditions under the supervision of an assigned non-English Language teacher to prevent the temptation of teaching the pupils.

### **3.7 Data Collection Process**

Since the target population were in two different schools but on the same compound, the researcher sought oral permission from the two different heads of the schools and the English Language teacher of Ayetepa Basic 'A' but for Basic 'B' the researcher is the same person teaching the English Language so there was no need to seek any permission. The researcher later visited each of the two schools separately and pre informed the participants and then consulted with the Basic 'A' to set a date for the sampling since the population of their JHS 2 pupils was more than the sample size needed from them. A day was set for the administering of the pre-test. The date was communicated to the 60 respondents on time; this made the researcher had access to all the 60 respondents on the day of the test administering. Basic 'A' respondents joined their 'B' counterparts in the JHS 2 classroom at Basic 'B' on the said date for the test administering. Since the objective test items were fairly short, it did not take the respondents so much time to complete it, but the written essay test took them more minutes. In all, one hour (1hr) was spent in completing the test.

After marking and analyzing the data collected, it was evident that both Basic 'A' and 'B' participants have almost same concord error problems, most especially on proximity and indefinite pronoun concord as revealed by the results of the analysis made on the test. The results were represented by percentage chart and bar graph. The

type of concord errors the respondents committed displayed lack of knowledge on the concept of concord. The concord error types identified in both the objective test and the written essay test have more to do with intralingual factors such as; a) incomplete application of rules, b) ignorance of rule restriction, c) false concept hypothesis and others and few intralingual and context of learning errors.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Since this study adopted a qualitative approach, the data collected was in the quantitative form. This implied that qualitative data analysis procedures have to be employed. Thus the data collected was analyzed using different statistical procedures. The specific data analysis method employed at each stage of the data analysis processes were described in detail as and when they were used in the data analysis process. They can therefore be found in the next chapter.

The third is to check stages of growth in individual's linguistic and communicative competences via E.A. Error reconstruction (E.R) involves the re-writing of the idiosyncratic structures produced in the spoken and written test of L2 learners. This strategy could be used to reduce concord error types observed in this study (Dauda, 2004).

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

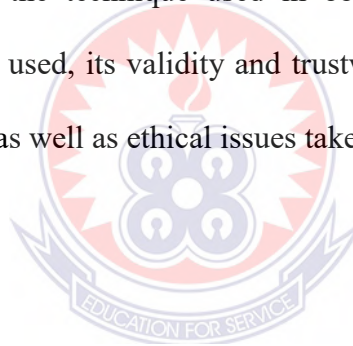
Two major ethical considerations were made during the process of this study. Firstly, the researcher took steps to ensure the anonymity of those who participated in the test, hence they were not required to provide their names on the answer sheets, just alphabets were used for easy comparison sake. This was done in order to conform to one of the major ethics of academic research, which emphasises the need to protect the identity of those who provided information during the data collection stage. This is usually to ensure that such individuals do not suffer any form of harm, harassment,

intimidation or other as a result of their decision to take part in the data collection process.

Secondly, the researcher, as much as possible, took steps to acknowledge the works of other researchers whose pieces were consulted during the course of this study. The references section provides a full list of all earlier works which were referenced during the course of this study.

### **3.10 Conclusion**

The chapter discussed the methodology adopted in the collection and analysis of data on concord errors from JHS 2 pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic „A“ and „B“ schools. It gives insight to the research designed used, the population of the study, the sample size as well as the technique used in obtaining the sample size. It also discussed the instrument used, its validity and trustworthiness and also how the data collection process went, as well as ethical issues taken into consideration.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the results from the data collected. The research was based on two specific objectives, thus: a) to identify the types of concord errors the JHS 2 pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic „A“ and 'B' Schools commit in and b) to identify the causes of the errors. This chapter discusses the concord error types identified in the pupils“ scripts and their possible causes. Five different concord error types were identified in the written essay scripts and in the objective test items. They are grammatical concord errors, determiner- noun concord errors, verb-tense concord errors, indefinite pronoun concord errors, and proximity concord errors. The analysis showed that these errors were caused by factors such as false analogy, misanalysis, incomplete application of rules, overgeneralization, and L1 interference.

#### 4.1 Categorization of Concord Errors

Data was collected on written essays and objective tests items and then the Error Analysis theory of second language learning was used to analyze the data. In all five different types of concord errors were identified. They are grammatical concord errors, determiner-noun concord errors, verb-tense concord errors, indefinite pronoun concord errors, and proximity concord errors. In all, four hundred and thirty-seven (437) concord errors were identified in the sixty pupils“ scripts marked. One essay question and thirty (30) objective test items were used to collect the data. The written essay was on the topic: „Should caning be abolished totally in our schools and classrooms? Give at least three reasons to support your argument“. And the objectives test items were spread on different concord types. The analysis on the various concord errors types the pupils committed have been discussed as follows:



#### 4.1.1 Grammatical concord error

Grammatical concord requires agreement of parts of a sentence, either by number, gender, person or case. Grammatical concord means that certain grammatical items agree with each other (Leech & Svartvik, 2002).

##### 4.1.1.1 Pronoun-antecedent/relative pronoun concord errors

For a sentence to be grammatically correct, all its parts must agree with one another. When a pronoun is used to refer back to a noun used, there must be agreement. Leech and Svartvik (2002) write that a pronoun which refers back to a singular noun phrase is in singular, and a pronoun which refers back to plural noun phrase is in plural. Quirk and Greenbaum (2000) are also of the view that personal pronouns in the third person must agree with their antecedents both in number (with the singular pronoun he, she and it) and in gender. Warriner's et al (1978, p. 112) also state that certain words that are closely related in sentences have matching forms. And just as subjects and verbs do have this kind of close relationship, pronouns and antecedents also do. Examples:

- i. Dorah saw her uncle this morning.(person/gender agreement)
- ii. Theophilus and Dora polished their shoes. (number agreement)
- iii. My neighbour *whose* son is the priest has passed away.
- iv. The women *who* sell under the tree were sacked

Here are examples of sentences produced by the pupils in this regard.

- i. Mrs Johnson was angry when she heard his daughter Dora was punished.
- ii. One little boy urinated on himself after she was lashed mercilessly.
- iii. One of our mates that were beaten fainted that day.
- iv. Dora is one of those ladies *who* dresses decently to school.
- v. My sister's workers *who* works well are always tipped by her.

From the examples, it is clear that the pupils could not identify the head-noun (referent) in each sentence because they occur in an environment of other nouns. This could be due to inadequate learning. In examples (i, ii, & iii.) above, there are no agreements between the pronouns used to refer back to their respective subjects in terms of gender. These errors were caused by L1 interference. This is because in the native language (Dangme) of the respondents, there is no distinction between pronoun use to refer back to a feminine or a masculine noun in the third person singular noun form. The pronoun *e* (which could be he/she/it) could be used to refer back to a third person singular noun subject of any gender and it is correct. And in examples (iii, iv & v) above, it is clear that the pupils could not identify the head-noun (referent) which the relative pronouns - *that* and *who* refer to in each sentence because they occur in an environment with other nouns. This could be due to inadequate learning.

#### **4.1.1.2 Constructions with more than one concord errors**

This is a sentence that has more than one construction errors. The errors could be subject-verb concord errors, pronoun-antecedent concord errors, determiner-noun concord errors. Here are examples of sentences with more than one concord errors produced by some of the pupils in their essays:

- i. People loses their life through caning.
- ii. These particular teacher do not cane cautiously.

In example (i), the pupils could not internalize the grammatical rule that indicates that in a structure where the same subject controls a series of verbs, all the verbs must agree with the subject. The pupils who committed this error have not internalized the subject-verb agreement concord by number rules well. And in example (ii), the pupils do not know the distinction between the demonstrative pronouns, *this*

(**singular**) and *these* (**plural**), hence followed a plural determiner with a singular subject which subsequently affects the rest of the elements in the sentence.

#### 4.1.1.3 *Plural subject with singular verb*

Murthy (2005) states that a verb must agree in number with its subject. A singular subject must agree with a singular verb, while a plural subject agrees with a plural subject

Examples:

i. The teachers often punish pupils who violate rules. (*plural subjects, plural verbs*)

ii. A teacher often punishes a pupil who violates rules. (*singular subjects, singular verbs*)

iii. The students like misbehaving towards the teachers. (*plural subject, plural verb*)

vi. She likes misbehaving towards the teachers. (*singular subject, singular verb*)

Here are examples of perverted sentences where the subjects did not agree with the verbs from the scripts of the pupils.

i. Our parents does complain about how the teachers does cane us mercilessly.

ii. Mostly, pupils drops out of school because of caning.

iii. The teachers often punishes pupils who violates rules.

iv. The students likes misbehaving towards the teachers.

In all the examples above, although the subjects of the sentences are plural, the pupils wrongly matched them with the singular form of the respective verbs concerned. The pupils who committed these errors operated on false concept hypothesis. They fell on the concept of plural formation of nouns in English, where nouns are marked with the

plural marker *-s(-s,-es or -ies)* to turn them plural. This knowledge was extended on the verbs in an attempt to make them plural to agree with their respective subjects.

#### ***4.1.1.4 Singular subjects with plural verbs***

Murthy (2005) states that a verb must agree in number with its subject. That is, a singular subject must agree with a singular verb, while a plural subject agrees with a plural subject. Examples:

i. **Mrs Rockson sells** tomatoes in the market daily.

ii. **The women sell** tomatoes in the market daily.

In the examples above, the first sentence has a singular subject; *Mrs Rockson* and so took the singular form of the verb, thus; *sells*. And the second example has a plural subject; *The women* and so took the plural form of the verb, thus; *sell*. Here are examples of perverted sentences where the subjects did not agree with the verbs from the scripts of the pupils.

i. The headteacher like caning more than even the teachers.

ii. My father hate seeing a mark of cane on me.

iii. The presence of cane frighten me seriously.

iv. My heart beat profusely any time spot a cane.

v. That teacher take delight in caning.

Though the subjects of each of the sentences above are singular, the corresponding verbs are plural. This error was caused by the omission of the /-s/ factor. This is because most grammatical persons do not take an “-s” ending in English, except the third person singular. The inflection “-s” of the third person singular is indicative in the present tense. There is the tendency of students dropping the “-s” ending as a redundant feature as seen in the pupils’ sentences above. Also this error could be caused by false concept hypothesis. The learners who committed this

error might be operating on their background knowledge on the morphological structure of singular nouns in English, hence try to establish subject-verb agreement between the two grammatical units by maintaining the morphological form (structure) of the verb by not inflecting, thinking that rather makes the verb singular in order to have the subject and the verb agree, forgetting a verb in the base form is rather plural. Yankson (1994) describes this kind of error as an intralingual error. He indicates that such an error has nothing to do with mother tongue interference.

#### ***4.1.1.5 Notional/collective noun concord error***

Notional concord focuses on the meaning of the whole entity (Crystal, 2004, p. 75).

Anything relating to an amount of money, time, distance and measurement is perceived as a whole entity; hence, a singular form of a verb must be chosen to agree with it. Littel (1992) sees collective noun as a singular noun that refers to a group of people or things, hence requires a singular verb to agree with it. Contrary to this states that the context in which a collective noun has been used determines whether a singular or plural verb should be chosen to agree with it. That is, if the noun is taken as a unit, then a singular verb will be used but if the members in the group are seen as separate entities then a plural verb will be used. Examples:

- i. Fifty dollars is a lot of money.
- ii. Two hours is a long time to wait.
- iii. Twenty kilometres is too long a distance to walk.
- iv. The committee meets twice a month.
- v. The committee contribute to issues they are empowered.

Here are some perverted sentences constructed by the pupils in the objective test items on this.

- i. Ten Ghana cedis are too huge an amount to dash out.
- i. Our staff are meeting today for a brief discussion on a pressing issue.
- iii. A bouquet of roses lend colour and fragrance to a room.

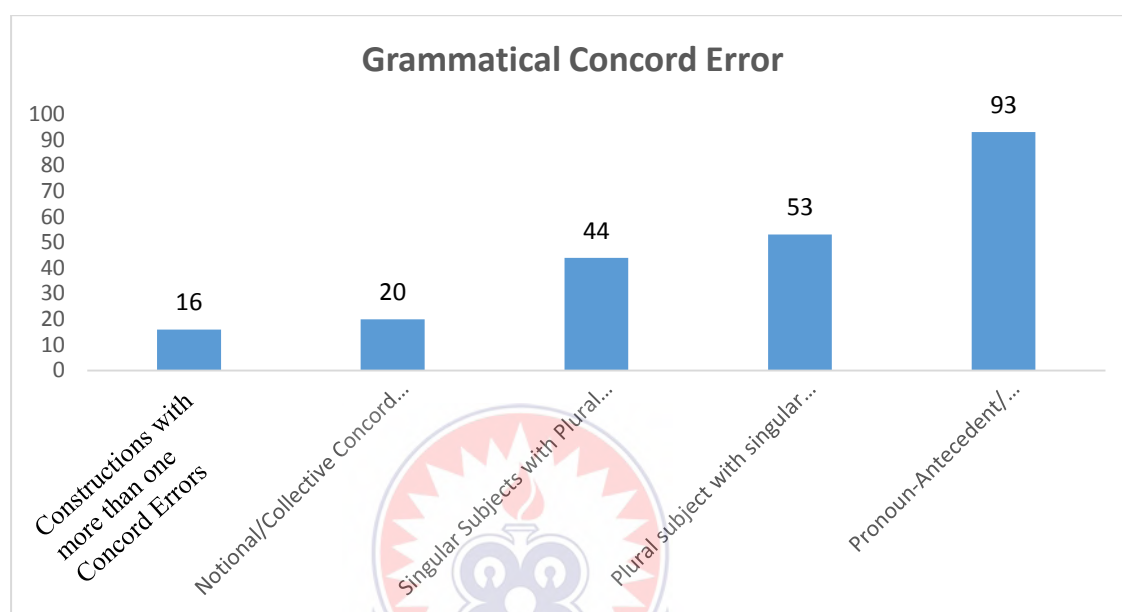
The pupils who constructed this sentence did not understand the concept well, so they considered the elements in the sentence as individual entities, hence chose a plural form of the verb concerned. This error was caused by inadequate learning.

**Table 4.1.1:** *Grammatical Concord Errors*

<b>Types of Errors</b>	<b>Frequency of Errors</b>	<b>Percentage of Errors</b>
Constructions with more than one Concord Errors	16	7.1
Notional/Collective Concord Errors	20	8.8%
Singular Subjects with Plural Verbs Errors	44	19.5%
Plural subject with singular verb Errors	53	23.5%
Pronoun-Antecedent/ Relative Pronoun Errors	93	41.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 4.1.1 shows the number of times a particular grammatical concord error was committed by the pupils in the tests. Pronoun-antecedent/Relative pronoun concord errors recorded the highest frequency of 93 errors, representing 41.2%. The errors were caused by L1 interference. The least recorded error was constructions with more than one concord error type, with 16 error occurrences representing 7.1%. The constructions with more than one concord errors were caused by incomplete application of subject-verb agreement rules. Plural subject with singular verb concord

errors were caused false analogy and then singular subject with plural verb concord errors were caused by omission of the /-s/ factor, whereas, that of notional/collective noun concord were caused by misapplication of rules. The result of this study is consistent with the earlier study of Arthur (2009) on Teaching Concord at the Junior High School in Ghana. The information in Table 4.1.1 is illustrated in Figure 4.1.1.



**Figure 4.1.1:** Grammatical concord errors

#### 4.1.2 Determiner-noun concord errors

Sani (2016) opines that English requires a distinction between how the reference is perceived in a cognitive way, whether as a discrete, countable entity, or as an indivisible, non-countable which is also referred to as “mass noun”, such as intelligence. The difference lies in the feature that highlights the experience of the speaker. An agreement between a determiner and a referent is achieved when the appropriate determiner is matched with the right referent in number, proximity, demonstratives, partition, quantity, distribution etc. Quirk and Greenbaum (2000, p. 61) also state that there are six classes of determiners with respect to the co-occurrence of the noun classes, thus count nouns and non-count nouns. Determiners co-occur with various noun forms to either establish its reference as definite or

indefinite through the use of articles, relating the entity to the context through the use of demonstratives, particularizing the referent, quantifying or distributing the entity (Downing and Locke, 2006, pp. 403-404). This study saw majority of the determiner-noun errors emerging from wrongful use of demonstratives and quantifiers.

The demonstrative class of determiners (this, these, that, those) are used to indicate the nearness or farness of the referent to the speaker as well as the number of the referent (Downing & Locke, 2006). The determiners *this* and *that* connote singular and agree with singular count noun referent. If the referent is near and singular, we use *this*, but *that* if the referent is singular but far from the speaker. And then *these* if the referents are plural and nearer to the speaker, and *those* if the referents are plural and far from the speaker. The quantifier class of determiners (some, few, a lot of, a little, a bit of, pieces of, a piece of, both, all, enough, several, some, many, much, more) are used to indicate number or amount of something involved. Quantifiers that *go with count nouns include: many, several, few etc.* Those that *go with non-count nouns include: much, a little, a bit of etc.* And those that *go with both count and non-count nouns include: some, both, all, enough, any, a lot of etc.* Appropriate use of determiners depends on strict rules. The referent (noun) concern determines the type of determiner to choose. If a singular count noun is the noun referent, depending on the context in which it will be used, either a singular quantifier or demonstrative that goes with a singular count noun must precede it, and vice versa.

#### **4.1.2.1 Determiner-count noun error**

Downing and Locke (2006) describe countable noun as nouns whose referent is countable. Count nouns have singular and plural forms. And they could be regular or irregular. The regular noun marks its plural with the bound morpheme *-s*, *(-es, or -ies e.g. book-books, tomato- tomatoes, body- bodies)* while the irregular count noun



changes its form to mark the plural through suppletion or replacive (eg. man- men, child- children, goose- geese, tooth - teeth, mouse-mice, louse-lice, foot-feet). A count noun must establish agreement relationship with a determiner in all appropriate forms to agree. Choosing the appropriate determiner to match with a particular count noun referent was a problem to the pupils because most of them could not distinction between determiners meant for count nouns only, hence misapplied them. Here are some sentences identified in the pupils' scripts in that regard:

- i. The school bought much canes down to cane us.
- ii. A little of our parents are happy with the caning.

From the perverted sentences above, it is evident that the pupils do not know the distinction between determiners meant for count nouns, hence matched the count nouns; *canes* and *parents* with the determiners; *much* and *a little* which are meant for non- count nouns instead of using *many* and *a few* which go with count nouns. This error was caused inadequate learning.

#### 4.1.2.2 *Determiner-non-count noun error*

According to Downing and Locke (2006) a non-count noun is one whose referent is cognitively perceived as not countable. We have non- count singular nouns (e.g. ethics, statistics, air, information, oil, advice, furniture, luggage, water, news, knowledge, time, money) and non- count plural nouns (e.g. scissors, trousers, shorts, sunglasses). The plural forms of non- count nouns are marked using preceding 'counters', some of which are determiners from the class of quantifiers (e.g. much, a little, a bit of, some, a lot of, enough, a pair of, a piece of, pieces of). A non-count noun must go with a determiner that goes with a non-count noun in all appropriate forms. Choosing the appropriate determiner to match with a particular non-count noun referent was a problem to the pupils because most of them could not establish a

distinction between determiners meant for non-count nouns only, hence generalized their usage thereby committing determiner- non count noun errors.

Here are some sentences identified in the pupils' scripts in that regard:

- i. I have many information on effects of corporal punishment.
- ii. We have few time to study because of.....
- iii. We have heard several news on the effects of caning.

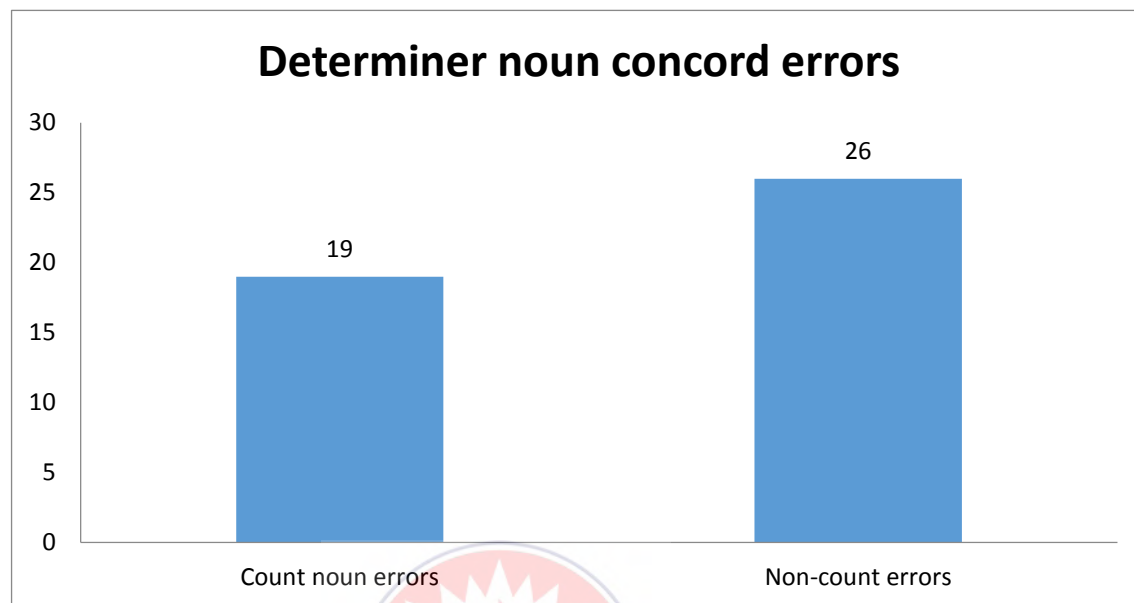
From the perverted sentences above, it is evident that the pupils did not know the distinction between determiners meant for non- count nouns, hence matched the non-count nouns; *information*, *time* and *news* with the determiners; *many*, *few* and *several* which are meant for count nouns instead of using *a lot of*, *much* and *a lot of* which go with non-count nouns. This error was caused by inadequate learning.

**Table 4.1.2: Determiner Noun Concord Errors**

<b>Types of Error</b>	<b>Frequency of Errors</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Determiner-count noun errors	19	42.2%
Determiner-non count errors	26	57.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 4.1.2 shows the number of times a particular determiner- noun concord error was committed by the pupils in the essay test. Determiner non -count noun error recorded the highest frequency of errors with 26 occurrences, representing 57.8% and determiner count noun errors recording the least occurrence of 19 errors, representing 42.2%. It is evident that the pupils did not know the distinction in how the various determiners function. In a similar study conducted by Boahemaa (2014), determiner

non -count noun recorded the higher error occurrence. The study therefore concluded that students did not know the distinction in how the various determiners function. The information in Table 4.1.2 is shown in Figure 4.1.2.



**Figure 4.1.2:** Determiner noun concord errors

#### 4.1.3 Verb-tense concord errors

Tense is “the grammatical expression of the location of events in time. It anchors an event to the speaker’s experience of the world by relating the event time to a point of reference” (Downing & Locke, 2006, pp. 352-353). A proper understanding of tense can be achieved with a good understanding of the verb phrase in English. This is because tense is an element within the auxiliary; and the verb phrase is made up of the auxiliary and the main verb. In addition, tense and the other elements of the auxiliary have a special way of relating to one another and to the main verb. These other elements of the auxiliary (apart from tense) are modality (shall, will, can, may), the perfective aspect marked by the form of „have“ plus the past participial morpheme „en“, and the progressive or continuous aspect marked by the form of „be“, plus the present participial morpheme „ing“. Three basic tenses are identified in English

grammar, but technically tense in English is either present or past. The three basic tenses are the present, the past and the future.

#### **4.1.3.1 Simple past tense**

According to Nndwamato (2017) in a cognitive point of view, the positions envisioned by past speaker are known but do not have immediate status, and they are not currently observed. Morphologically, the majority of words in English have a unique past tense (played, saw), and, semantically, the past tense basically refers to a situation that is prior to the present. Examples:

- i. It rained last week.
- ii. My brother left us here alone,

Here are some sentences constructed by the pupils in that regard

- i. The teacher **cane** me yesterday because I **insult** my friend.
- ii. All the students **cry** last week when the teacher **cane** them.
- iii. The teacher **sack** all my friends who **refuse** to receive the punishment yesterday.
- iv. Last year the government **pass** a bill that.....
- v. Some of my friends **stop** school because of caning.

The examples given above showed that the kind of error the pupils committed in the use of the simple past tense was caused by L1 interference. . The pupils who committed these errors took adverb of time to be a past tense marker instead of reflecting the verb involved base on the tense under consideration. It is also possible that this error was caused by false analogy or misanalysis. From the sentences above, all the actions in bold have taken place already and so the pupils were expected to have used the past forms of the verbs respectively but they did not, instead they added adverb of time to the sentences to mark the past. This is a clear evidence of L1

interference. Interference errors are errors that reflect the structure of the L1 (Dulay & Burt, 1974). The participants involved in this study are Dangmes who speak and study Dangme as well as a subject in school. And in Dangme, the past tense is not marked, occasionally an adverb of time may be added to the sentence to indicate a particular time in the past. The examples below give a clear picture of how the past is marked in the pupils' L1 aside the tonal marking.

Using the verb **Fiaa** (cane)

- i. E **fiaa** kpa saminya. > S/he **canes** severely. (**simple present**)
- ii. E **fiaa** mi kpa saminya. > S/he **caned** me severely. (**simple past**).
- iii. E **fiaa** mi kpa saminya **lingmi** > S/he **caned** you severely the last time. (**simple past**)

#### 4.1.3.2 *Simple present tense*

Obi (2016) says present tense represents the position that has immediate reality, e.g. what is currently being observed. In morphology, present tense is distinguished only by a single third party (but includes three forms (am, are, is). It includes the time of the future (including a reference to tomorrow). Dodu (2004) also states that the simple present tense is a present verb form that has no auxiliary verb. It has the same form as the infinitive but adds „-s“ inflection to the third person singular noun (pronoun) - 'he, she and it'. And it is used to:

- a). Express habitual action. Examples:
  - i. **She goes** to school daily
  - ii. **My parents** usually **close** late from work.
- b). Express facts or general truth: Examples:
  - i. **The earth revolves** around the sun.
  - ii. **Jesus is** the son of God.

iii. **Amphibians live** on land and in water.

Here are some perverted sentences identified in the pupils' scripts on simple present tense.

i. I **did not** like our Science teacher, because he canes too much.

ii. A mere sight of cane **scared** me naturally.

The pupils have not really gained mastery over the usage of the simple present tense. It is clear from the pupils' sentences above that they don't know how general facts as well as habitual form of the verb tense is formed to represent the present, hence marked them in the past with the notion that the events were in the past. This is a clear developmental error.

#### *4.1.3.3 Simple future aspect*

Quirk and Greenbaum (1993) state that an action in the future is relative to the speaker or writer. The future has no inflected forms in English. Instead, it is formed using the modal verbs; will and shall, the simple present, present progressive.

Examples:

i. The government **will pass** a law on corporal punishment soon.

ii. We **shall write** quiz tomorrow.

iii. School **reopens** next week.

iv. I **am going to pass** all my papers.

Here are examples of sentences that were wrongly constructed on simple future tense by the pupils:

i. The government will passes a law soon on corporal punishment.

ii. Soon, our classroom will turns ghost room because of caning.

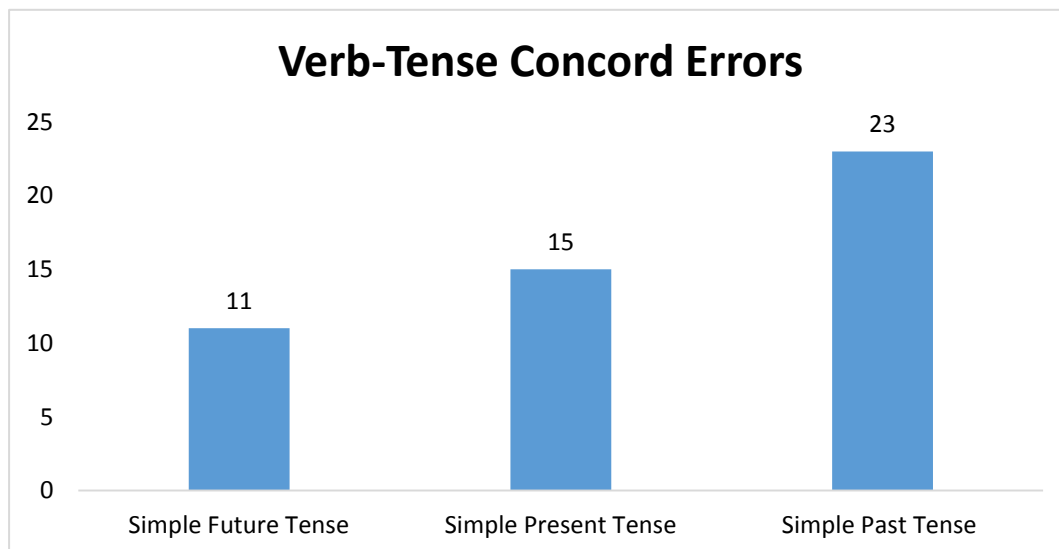
The pupils who committed these errors might be operating on the principle of subject-verb agreed. The subjects of both sentence (i. and ii.) are singular, therefore the pupils

wrote the singular forms of the verbs even though a future marker(modal verb) came in between the subjects and the main verbs, breaking the rule of subject-verb agreement in the third person singular form in the present tense. This error was caused by inadequate learning leading to overgeneralization of rules.

**Table 4.1.3:** *Verb-Tense Concord Errors*

<b>Types of Error</b>	<b>Frequency of Errors</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Simple Future Tense	11	22.5%
Simple Present Tense	15	30.6%
Simple Past Tense	23	46.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 4.1.3 shows the number of times a particular concord error was committed by the pupils in the essay test. Simple past tense error recorded the highest frequency of errors with 23 occurrences, representing 46.9%, with the least recorded frequency being simple future concord errors with 11 occurrences, representing 22.5%. The result of this study is similar to that of Nndwamoto (2017) on the written concord errors. That study found high incidence of Simple past tense error among First Additional Language learners in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa. On the contrary, Obi (2016) on An Error Analysis of the English Concord of Students in Onitsha Urban revealed that the performance of St. Charles Secondary School in Simple past tense error was better. The information in Table 4.1.3 is shown in Figure 4.1.3.



**Figure 4.1.3:** Verb-tense concord errors

#### 4.1.4 Indefinite pronoun concord error

Schibsbye (1979, pp. 259-283) asserts that they are “pronouns denoting: 1. (together with nouns having countable associations) or 2. (together with nouns having non- countable associations). An indefinite pronoun is a pronoun that refers to an unspecified or unidentified person or thing. It is vague, rather than specific, and doesn't have an antecedent. Indefinite pronouns include **quantifiers** (some, any, enough, several, many, much); **universals** (all, both, every, each); and **partitives** (any, anyone, anybody, either, neither, no, nobody, some, someone). Many of the indefinite pronouns can function as determiners. These indefinite pronouns are in singular, plural and variable forms. If any indefinite pronoun considered singular (one, someone, nobody, none, somebody, neither, either, each, everyone etc.) is used either with or without a prepositional phrase as the subject of a sentence, a singular form of a verb is required to agree with. Same way, if an indefinite pronoun considered plural (some, several, both, few, enough, many etc.) is used as a subject of a sentence either with or without a prepositional phrase, a plural form of a verb is required to agree with it. With the variables (all, most, some,



everybody), are considered when they refer to a quantity of something, and plural when they refer to a number of things thought of individually.

Examples:

- i. None is perfect in this world.
- ii. Many are called, but few are chosen.
- iii. Nobody is above the law.
- iv. All is well with me.
- v. All are cordially invited.
- vi. Some of the food was eaten.
- vii Some of the apples were eaten.

Here are some errors the pupils committed in choosing the best option to have the indefinite pronoun and its expected correspondent agree.

- i. Nobody **like** to be cheated in anything.
- ii. Each of them **have** a pen.
- iii. Many of the books I read **was** written by Ghanaians.
- iv. one of the politicians **were** summoned for a meeting yesterday.
- v. Some of the meat **are** missing.

In examples (i., ii. and iv), the indefinite pronouns serving as the subjects of the respective sentences are singular and as such should have been matched with singular verbs but the pupils violated the rule of subject-verb agreement by choosing the plural form of the verbs instead. The errors were caused by inadequate learning. In examples (iii and v) ,the indefinite pronouns serving as the subjects of the respective sentences are plural and should have been matched with plural verbs but the pupils violated the rule of subject-verb agreement by choosing the singular form of the verb.

The pupils could not apply the rule of indefinite pronouns which states that plural indefinite pronouns take plural verbs and vice versa.

#### **4.1.4.1 Singular Indefinite Pronoun**

As discussed earlier, a singular indefinite pronoun takes a singular verb, while plural indefinite pronoun takes a plural verb. Indefinite pronouns that are considered singular in nature include: *anyone, everything, everyone, each, none, neither, either, one, someone, somebody*, and *anything*. The antecedents (everyone, each, someone, anyone) are called indefinite pronouns because they do not refer to a specific person, place, or thing. When any of them is used as a subject of a sentence without a prepositional phrase, it must be followed immediately with the singular form of either a main or primary auxiliary verb.

Examples:

- i. None **has** paid the exams fee yet.
- ii. Everyone **is** paying for the trip.
- iii. Nobody **likes** an indolent person as a friend.

An example of the pupils' wrongly selected options in the objective test items in that regards.

- i. Nobody **like** to be cheated in anything.

In the example above, the indefinite pronoun, *nobody*, serving as the subject of the sentence is singular and should have been matched with the singular form of the verb but the pupils' violated the rule of subject-verb agreement by choosing a plural form of the verb concerned. The error was caused by incomplete application of rule due to inadequate learning.

#### 4.1.4.2 Singular indefinite pronoun with prepositional phrase concord error

The use of any of these indefinite pronouns; *each, everyone, no one, something, none, anybody, everything, another, one, everybody, nobody, someone, nothing, anything, anyone, somebody*. as the subject of a sentence requires a singular form of a verb to agree with it even if it co-occurred with a prepositional phrase that has a plural noun/pronoun in it.

Examples:

- i. **One of you is** my personal assistant.
- ii. **Any of the pupils is** capable of being a prefect
- iii. **None of the boys was** in the class before I came.
- iv. **Each of them wants** to be appreciated.

Here are some wrong options the pupils selected in the objective test items in that regard:

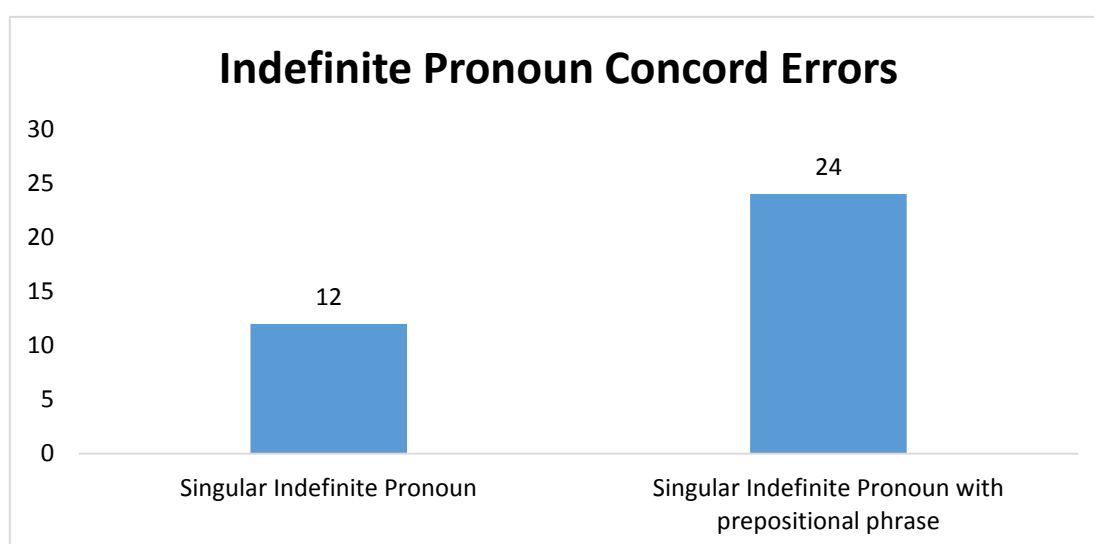
- i. The head teacher sacked *one* of the **student** today.
- ii. *Each* of them **have** a pen.
- iii. *One* of the politicians **were** summoned for a meeting yesterday.

These errors were caused by the pupils' inability to identify the head-noun in each sentence in an environment where there are other nouns in a prepositional phrase. This is as a result of inadequate learning. The summary of the indefinite pronoun concord errors is presented in Table 4.1.4.

**Table 4.1.4:** *Indefinite Pronoun Concord Errors*

<b>Types of Errors</b>	<b>Frequency of Errors</b>	<b>Percentage of Errors</b>
Singular indefinite pronoun concord errors	12	33.3%
Singular indefinite pronoun with prepositional concord error	24	66.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.1.4 shows the different indefinite pronoun concord error types committed by the pupils in the objective test. The figure below shows that the most committed error was singular indefinite with prepositional noun phrase. The errors were caused by the pupils' inability to identify the head-noun in the environment of other nouns. A similar study conducted by Sayeed (2016) on Error Analysis in writing also revealed singular indefinite pronoun with prepositional noun phrase as the most committed error. The information in Table 4.1.4 is illustrated in Figure 4.1.4.

**Figure 4.1.4:** Indefinite pronoun concord errors

#### 4.1.5 Proximity concord errors

The principle of proximity denotes agreement of verb with the head word. Quirk and Greenbaum (2000) indicate that the principle of proximity has to do with an agreement between the verb and whatever noun or pronoun closely preceding it or the headword of the subject. Example: Neither *the headteachers* nor *the secretary* comes here everyday.

In this sentence, per one of the definition given above, '*secretary*' becomes the subject of the sentence since it immediately precedes the verb. That notwithstanding, there are different types of proximity concord with their respective rules. Here are some types and their various rules.

##### 4.1.5.1 Subordinator/accompaniment concord error

If a sentence is made of two clauses and the subject in the main clause (singular or plural) is accompanied by any of these intervening phrases: *together with, in association with, in addition to, like, as much as, with, including, in collaboration with, along with, rather than, as well as, no less than*, the nouns in the intervening phrases do not control the sentence, instead, it is the head-noun (referent) in the main clause that determines the form of the verb to agree with it. Gogovi et al (2005) call these intervening expressions Pseudo conjunctions because they are not true conjunctions, and so cannot connect two subjects together to make them plural.

Examples:

- i. Jane *like her sisters* hates stealing.
- ii. My parents *with the trader* sell every Monday evening.
- iii. The MP *together with his children* reads often on how to give public talks.
- iv. This novel *as well as others I read* is very educative.
- v. A drummer *in collaboration with singers* performs well.

However, if a coordinating conjunction *and* co-occurred in the same sentence with any of the intervening phrases mentioned earlier and the conjunction *and* came first, then the sentence must be considered a compound sentence having plural subjects hence, a plural form of the verb must be used to agree with the subjects. Examples:

- i. The head teacher **and** his assistants *together with the secretary* keep records of inventories.
- ii. My mother **and** the pastor *like my friends* pray for me all the time.

On the contrary, if any of those intervening phrases co-occurred in the same sentence with the conjunction *and* but the intervening phrase came before *and*, then the number of subjects in the noun phrase preceding such an intervening phrase selects the form of the verb to agree with the subject. Examples:

- i. Our teachers *as well as the chief* **and** his children like punishing us.
- ii. Our teacher *as well as the chief* **and** his children likes punishing us.

Here are some perverted sentences constructed by the pupils in the objective test items on this concept.

- i. The man *with his child* were beaten severely yesterday by a gang of thieves.
- ii. Our school *as well as ours* are good in sports.
- iii. The inspectors, *alongside the officer* is expected shortly.

The errors committed by the pupils here were caused by the pupils' inability to identify the noun referent in a particular sentence because of the complexity of the rules involved.

#### 4.1.5.2 Coordinator concord error

Leech and Svartvik (2002) state in their discussion on coordinated or compound subjects that if a subject consists of two or more nouns or noun phrases coordinated or joined by *and*, the verb **must** be in a plural form. Examples:

- i. My mother and her brother have travelled abroad last night.
- ii. Benedict and Boniface are my nephews.
- iii. The principals and their assistants **were** awarded by the board of governors.

*There are however two exceptions to the rule above.*

• ***The first one says***, a compound subject connected by '*and*' which is seen as a singular subject due to popular use must be considered a singular subject and accompanied with the singular form of the verb even though two noun clauses may be involved.

Examples:

- i. Beans and gari **is** my favourite.
- ii. Rice and stew **was** served at the ceremony.

• ***And the second one says***, if the subjects connected by '*and*' in the two clauses refers to the same person or entity, then the two subjects should be considered singular and followed with the singular form of the verb involved.

Examples:

- i. The caterer and wife of Mr Johnson **has** gone crazy.
- ii. The headteacher and father of the thief **was** imprisoned yesterday.

However, **if both subjects connected by 'and' are preceded by the definite article 'the'** then they cease to be the same person or entity, hence become plural subjects and must be accompanied by a plural form of the verb involved. Examples:

- i. The caterer and the wife of Mr Johnson **have** gone crazy.
- ii. The headteacher and the father of the thief **were** imprisoned yesterday.

Here are some perverted sentences constructed by the pupils in the objective test items on this.

- i. Rice and stew **were** served at the party.
- ii. The manager and wife of our boss **were** here today.

From the examples given by the pupils, it is evident that the pupils could not internalized the rules well because of the complexity of the rules involved, hence applied the rules wrongly.

#### **4.1.5.2 Correlative concord error**

The principle of attraction comes in where subjects that are connected by correlative pairs (*either.... or, neither.... nor, not only ...but also etc*) are disjunctive subjects, that is, if they differ in number and in person. In such instances, the rule says that the number of verb is determined by the number of the last noun phrase (the closer or closest noun to the verb).

Examples:

- i. Neither my parents nor my brother knows my whereabouts.
- ii. Either you or the teachers know my whereabouts.
- iii. Not only the students but also the teacher is lazy.
- iv. Either my parents or I am supposed to pay the bills.
- v. Neither the sermon nor the readings interest me.

Here are some perverted sentences constructed by the pupils in the objective test items in this regards.

- i. Either she, my friend or I is speaking the truth.
- ii. Neither the teacher nor the students knows the correct answer.

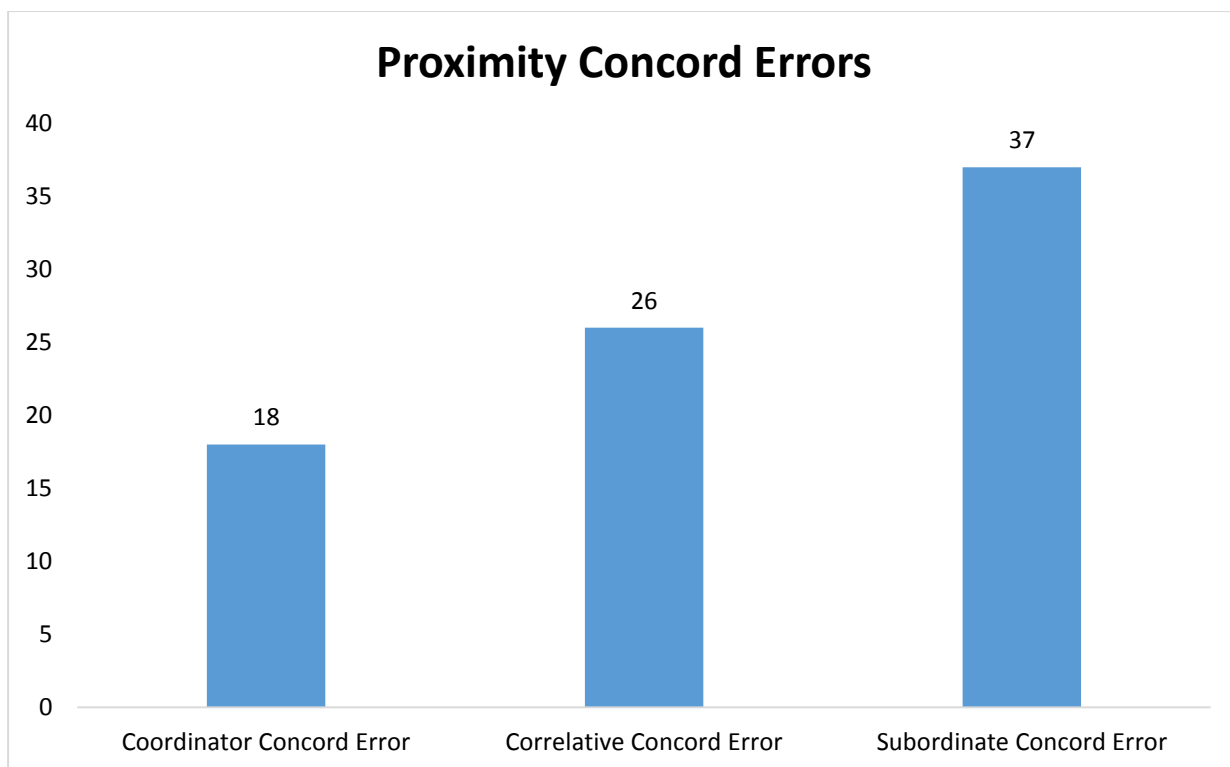


The errors were caused by failure to learn the condition under which a particular rule is applied because of the complexity of the rules involved.

**Table 4.1.5:** *Proximity Concord Errors*

<b>Types of Error</b>	<b>Frequency of Errors</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Subordinator Concord Errors	37	45.7%
Coordinator Concord Errors	18	22.2%
Correlative Concord Errors	26	32.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.1.5 shows the different proximity concord errors committed by the pupils in the objective test and these were presented in Figure 4.1.5. Subordinator proximity concord recorded the highest errors, with coordinator proximity concord recording the least. The different types of errors committed attest to the fact that the pupils could not internalize the various numerous principles of proximity concord due to the complexity of the rules involved. Though the results of this study is on proximity concord, but as it has something to do with subject –verb agreement, the results will be said that to be consistent with earlier studies of Nndwamato (2017), Obi (2016) and Sani (2016) which found subject-verb agreement concord errors as a predominant cases among students. The information in Table 4.1.5 is shown in Figure 4.1.5



**Figure 4.1.5:** Proximity concord errors

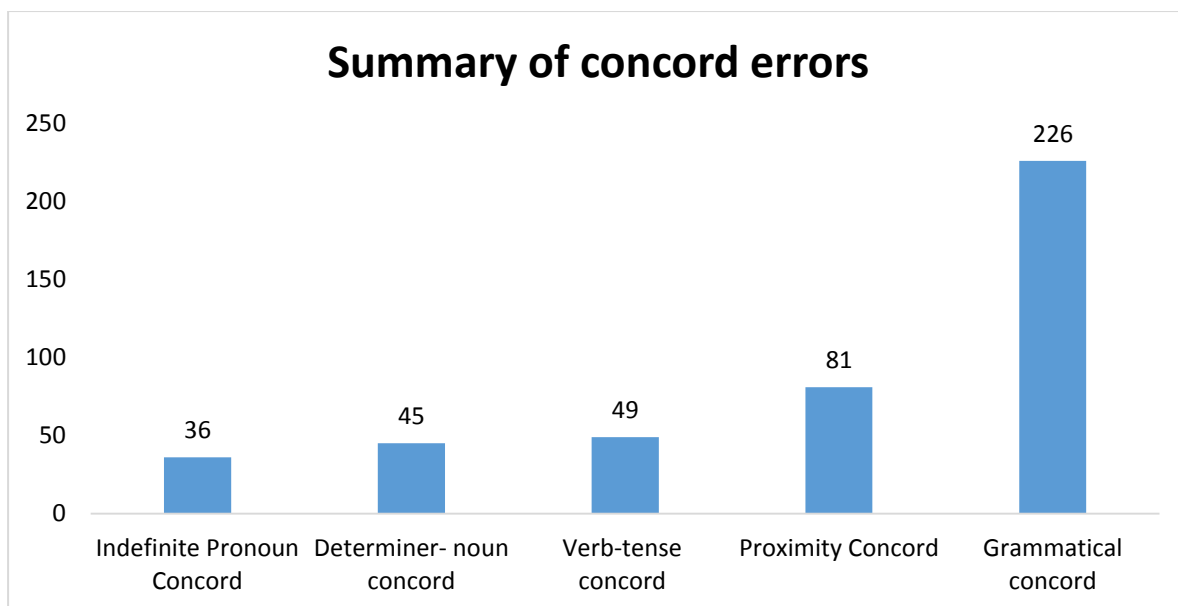
#### 4.1.5 Summary of the categorization of concord errors

Table 4.1.6 presents a summary of the categories of concord errors identified in the pupils' scripts.

**Table 4.1.6:** *Categories of Concord Errors*

Categories of Error	Frequency of Errors	Percentage (%)
Indefinite Pronoun Concord Errors	36	8.2%
Determiner- Noun Concord Errors	45	10.3%
Verb-Tense Concord Errors	49	11.2%
Proximity Concord Errors	81	18.5%
Grammatical Concord Errors	226	51.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.1.6 presents a summary of the categories of concord errors identified in the pupils' scripts. It shows that grammatical concord errors constitute the highest error found in the pupils' scripts. This had a percentage of 51.7% with 226 cases of error occurrences. These errors were caused by various factors such as; incomplete application of rules, L1 interference, undergeneralization, omission of the /-s/ factor, inability to identify the nominal head in a noun phrase, overgeneralization and other English language rules. Table 4.1.6 further reveals that proximity concord errors constitute the second highest error with 81 occurrences, representing 18.5%. The analysis revealed that the errors were caused by incomplete application of rules, ignorance of rule restrictions, false hypothesis, and overgeneralization etc. Again, Table 4.1.6 further reveals that verb tense concord errors placed third, in terms of error occurrences with 49 errors, representing 11.2%. These errors were caused by various factors such as; L1 interference, developmental errors, inadequate learning, omission of the -s factor and overgeneralization. Then the fourth place was taken by determiner- noun concord errors with 45 occurrences, representing 10.3%. These errors were caused by the pupils' inability to apply the rules of classes of determiners appropriate for a particular noun type. Finally, indefinite pronoun had the least occurrence of error of 36, representing 8.2%. And they were caused by inadequate learning. The results of this study is consistent with earlier studies of Nndwamoto (2017), Obi (2016), and Sani (2016) which found subject-verb agreement concord errors(grammatical concord) as predominant cases among students. The information in Table 4.1.6 is presented in Figure 4.1.6.



**Figure 4.1.6:** Categories of concord errors

#### 4.2 Causes of Pupils' Concord Errors

An error “is an unintended deviation from the immanent rules of a language variety made by a second language learner” (Brown, 1980, p. 163). He indicates that causes of errors can be classified into three categories; interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer and the context of learning. This analysis revealed several factors as the causes of the errors committed by the pupils. Notable among them are: interlingual and intralingual factors such as overgeneralization, false concepts hypothesis, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules, inadequate learning, avoidance, faulty teaching, omission. Other possible causes include inadequate scope of concord topics in the basic school syllabus and textbooks, students negative attitude towards the study of the English Language, students inability to truly internalize the concord rules of the English language, how teachers teach the concord rules, inadequate exposure to the second language at the early stage of second language acquisition due to certain language policies. An example of such policies is NALAP which states that the child’s L1 should be used as a medium of instruction right from Kindergarten up to Lower primary three. Also, lack of

motivation from both teachers and parents is another cause of students' concord errors. Again, teaching methods employed by teachers to teach can equally be a causative factor of errors (faulty teaching). Touchie (1983) is of the view that teachers who try to communicate or teach in the target language but have not completely acquired the grammatical form necessary to do so cause errors.

Below is a detailed discussion on the causes of some of the errors the pupils committed.

#### ***4.2.1 Interlingual transfer***

This has to do with an error from the transfer of grammatical or stylistic elements from the source language to the target language. The analysis revealed that the participants involved in this study were slightly affected by the mother tongue, that is, there had been interference. And this was explicitly displayed in simple past tense concord errors and singular subject with plural verb concord errors. Wilkins (1972) opines that an individual who is learning a foreign language already knows the mother tongue and it is this which the individual tries to transfer. Therefore, a „positive transfer“ or „facilitation“ will be achieved if the structure of the two languages is similar, This will make the transfer justified, however, if the structures of the two languages are different, there will be negative transfer and the transfer unjustified. This study revealed exactly what Wilkins said regarding errors caused by interlingual transfer. This was manifested in singular subject with plural verb concord errors and simple past tense concord errors. The pupils fell on their background knowledge in the L1 even though the structures of the two languages are different. This resulted in a negative transfer as rightly put by Wilkins. Dulay and Burt (1974) also explain interference errors (interlingual transfer) as errors that reflect the structure of the L1. This was also manifested in the sentences constructed by the

pupils on simple past tense. Here are some sentences constructed by the pupils in the simple past tense that revealed the presence of interlingual transfer.

- i. The teacher **cane** me yesterday because I **insult** my friend.
- ii. All the students **cry** last week when the teacher **cane** them.
- iii. The teacher **sack** all my friends who **refuse** to receive the punishment yesterday.
- iv. Last year the government **pass** a bill that.....
- v. Some of my friends **stop** school because of caning.

Since all the actions in bold above have taken place already, the pupils were expected to use the past forms of the verbs but they did not, instead they added an adverb of time to mark the past. This is a clear evidence of L1 interference, because in the pupils' L1, the past is marked phonotactically but not inflectionally, however, an adverb of time may be added to the sentence occasionally to indicate the particular time in the past. The examples below give a clear picture of how the past is marked in the pupils' L1, hence the production of those perverted sentences due to L1 interference.

Using the verb **Fiaa** (cane) as an example.

- i. E **fiaa** kpa saminya. >S/He **canes** very well. (simple present)
  - ii. E **fiaa** mo kpa saminya. > S/He **caned** you very well. (simple past).
  - iii. E **fiaa** mo kpa saminya lingmi. >S/He **caned** you very well the last time. (simple past).
- The examples given above showed that the kind of error the pupils committed in the use of the simple past tense was an interlingual transfer.

#### 4.2.2 *Intralingual transfer*

Errors that reflect the general characteristics of rule learning are intralingual errors. These errors are characterized by faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, failure to learn conditions under which rules apply, false concept hypothesis.

#### 4.2.3. *Overgeneralization/false concept hypothesis*

This is an error caused by extension of target language rules to areas where they do not apply. In English for instance, it is only nouns that have plural marker *-s* (*-s, -es or -ies*), verbs do not. So an addition of any of these morphemes *-s, -es or -ies* to a verb rather makes it singular. Therefore, for grammatical concord to exist between a plural subject and a plural verb, the morpheme *-s* must not be added. If added, it turns the verb singular. Examples:

i. The teachers often punish pupils who violate rules. (*plural subjects, plural verbs*)

ii. The students like misbehaving towards the teachers. (*plural subject, plural verb*)

Here are examples of such sentences identified in their scripts:

i. Our parents does complain about how the teachers does cane us mercilessly.

ii. Mostly, pupils drops out of school because of caning.

iii. The teachers often punishes pupils who violates rules.

iv. The students likes misbehaving towards the teachers.

In the two examples above, although the subjects of the sentences are plural, the pupils wrongly matched them with the singular form of the respective verbs. The pupils who committed these errors were ignorant of the rule restriction and so operated on false concept hypothesis and generalized the rules. They fell on the concept of plural formation of nouns in English, where nouns are marked with the

plural marker *-s (-s, -es or -ies)* to turn them plural. This knowledge was extended on the verbs in an attempt to make them plural to agree with their respective subjects.

Richards (1971) cited in Ellis (1994, pp. 56-57) describes such errors as developmental errors. Developmental errors occur when the learner attempts to build up false hypothesis about the target language on the basis of limited experience.

#### 4.2.4. *False analogy*

In English, all grammatical persons do not take an „s“ ending in the verbs, except the third person singular in the present tense, as a result, most students often drop the „s“ ending because they consider it as a redundant feature. Yankson (1994) describes this error as an intralingual error. He indicates that such an error has nothing to do with mother tongue interference. Examples of some of these errors identified in the pupils“ scripts in that regard.

- i. The headteacher like caning more than even the teachers.
- ii. My father hate seeing a mark of cane on me.
- iii. The presence of cane frighten me seriously.
- iv. My heart beat profusely any time spot a cane.
- v. That teacher take delight in caning.
- vi. The pupil have a genuine case.

In the examples above, though the subject of each of the sentences is singular, the corresponding verb is plural. This error was caused by the omission of the /-s/ factor. Also this error could be caused by false concept hypothesis. The pupils who committed these errors might be operating on their background knowledge on the structure of singular nouns, hence try to maintain the morphological form (structure) of the verb by not inflecting it with the notion that, that makes the verb singular in order to have the subject and the verb agree, forgetting a verb in the base form is



rather plural. Yankson (1994) describes this kind of error an intralingual error that has nothing to do with mother tongue interference.

#### ***4.2.5. Incomplete application of rules***

These errors occur when the learner fails to apply certain target language rules just because they are thought of to be too difficult. The study revealed this type of error dominantly in proximity concord which has several rules that needed to be observed strictly, else an error will be committed. Most of the respondents see some of these rules too difficult and complex, so did faulty generalization at some places and at other places too the rules were misapplied. Examples of pupils wrongly constructed sentences on proximity.

- i. Neither the teacher nor the students knows the correct answer.
- ii. Rice and stew were served at the ceremony.
- iii. The inspectors, *alongside the officer* is expected shortly.

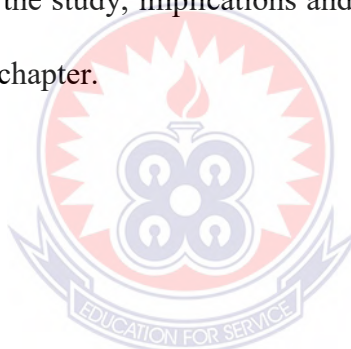
#### ***4.2.6. Summary***

The analysis of the concord errors in this study has revealed that most of the concord errors the pupils committed were caused by interlingual transfer, intralingual transfers such as: plural inflectional errors, overgeneralization, misapplication of rules, avoidance, false analogy, omission of the /-s/ factor and other factors such as: lack of practice, inappropriate teaching methods used by some teachers, lack of exposure to the second language at the early stage of life due to certain language policies e.g. the NALAP policy, incompetence of some English Language subject teachers and lack of motivation from both teachers and the pupils themselves.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

The chapter has analyzed the data collected on both written and objective test items used in collecting the data on concord error types the JHS 2 pupils of Ayetepa

D/A Basic „A“ and „B“ were having challenges in and the causes of these errors. In all five different categories of concord error types were identified. They are grammatical concord of all kinds with the highest error occurrence of 226 errors, representing 51.7%, followed by proximity concord with 81 errors, representing 18.5%, then verb-tense concord errors followed with 49 errors, representing 11.2%. Determiner–noun concord errors came fourth with 45 error occurrences, representing 10.3%. And then indefinite pronoun came last with the least error occurrence of 36, representing 8.2%, followed by pronoun-antecedent/relative pronoun concord errors with 46 occurrences, representing 23%. These errors were caused by factors such as L1 interference, intralingual factors and other possible factors such as context of learning, lack of motivation. Summary of the study, implications and suggestions for future study will be discussed in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings of the study, conclusion and suggestions. The purpose of this study was to analyze the types of concord errors the JHS 2 Pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic „A“ and „B“ pupils have challenges in and the causes. Sixty (60) participants were involved in the study. After the written essays and the objective essays test items were marked and analyzed, it was revealed that the pupils committed five different types of concord errors. These are grammatical concord error, determiner-noun concord errors, verb-tense concord errors, indefinite pronoun concord errors, and proximity concord errors.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

After analysing all the sixty (60) essay and objective test items ,it was revealed that the JHS 2 Pupils of Ayetepa D/A Basic „A“ and „B“ had committed a total of 437 different concord errors. The errors were grouped into five different categories. They are grammatical concord error, determiner- noun concord errors, verb-tense concord errors, indefinite pronoun concord errors and proximity concord errors.After the analysis, the result revealed that grammatical concord errors constitute the highest error found in the pupils“ scripts. This had a percentage of 51.7% with 226 cases of errors occurrences. These errors were caused by various factors such as incomplete application of rules, L1 interference, undergeneralization, overgeneralization and other English language rules.

The study further revealed that proximity concord errors constitute the second highest error with 81 occurrences, representing 18.5%. Again, the study found that verb tense concord errors placed third, in terms of error occurrences with 49 errors,

representing 11.2%. These errors were caused by various factors such as; L1 interference, developmental errors, inadequate learning, omission of the /-s/ factor and overgeneralization. Then the fourth place was taken by determiner- noun concord errors with 45 occurrences, representing 10.3%. These errors were caused by the pupils' inability to apply the rules of classes of determiners appropriate for a particular noun type. Finally, indefinite pronoun errors had the least occurrence of error of 36, representing 8.2%. And they were caused by inadequate learning. The analysis of the concord errors in this study has revealed that most of the concord errors the pupils committed were caused by interlingual transfer, intralingual transfers such as plural inflectional errors, overgeneralization, misapplication of rules, avoidance, false analogy, omission of the /-s/ factor and other factors such as: lack of practice, inappropriate teaching methods used by some teachers, lack of exposure to the second language at the early stage of life due to certain language policies, for example, the NALAP policy, incompetence of some English Language subject teachers and lack of motivation from both teachers and the pupils themselves.

## **5.2 The Role of Concord Errors in the Teaching and Learning of English Language**

Errors are inevitable in any learning situation. Throughout the years, the importance attributed to language follows the historical trends and theories on L2 teaching and learning. In the 1950s it was considered as an important factor of the learning process. In this sense, negative transfer was mostly highlighted. According to Kesharvaz (1994), language learners' errors were severely criticized by well-known linguists of that era and it was strictly emphasized that L2 errors should be avoided and, in case of occurrence, they should be corrected at all costs because they were considered dire. In the 1960s they had already lost much of their importance and impact since newer L2 approaches regarded learners' errors as fully acceptable and

treated them as part of a creative process towards the achievement of linguistic perfection and communicative meaning.

Recently, and in relation to the communicate approach in language learning, a more balanced perspective has emerged according to which language transfer and the respective errors are seriously considered as important linguistic elements that can't be avoided nor criticized. Errors are no longer seen as signs of failure that have to be prevented and eradicated, but are rather considered as signs of developmental processes involved in the learning of language. According to Corder (1967), errors are significant in three different ways. Firstly, to the teacher, in that they tell him, if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. Secondly, they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language. Thirdly, they are indispensable to the learner himself, because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn. It is a way the learner has for testing his/her hypotheses about the nature of the language he/she is learning.

From this, he argues that errors provide evidence of how language is learnt. They serve as „tools“ through which the learner discovers the rules of the target language. In summary, it may be argued that learners' errors should not necessarily be considered significant problems and obstacles in the context of learning a second language; rather they can be viewed as natural elements to be dealt with through appropriate processes. In light of recent open and communicative approaches to language learning, errors are tolerated if communicative goals are achieved and the central points of communication are not altered. All, in all, these errors enlightens the classroom teacher to modify his methods of teaching.

### 5.3 Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this research revealed that the JHS 2 Pupils in Ayetepa D/A Basic 'A' and 'B' Schools in the Ningo-Prampram district of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana have problems with concord rules. The findings have pedagogical implications for syllabus designers, textbook writers, teachers of English Language and students of JHS 2 Pupils in Ayetepa D/A Basic 'A' and 'B' Schools in the Ningo-Prampram district of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana and other schools by extension. Since the only category of concord to be taught in the basic school syllabus relates to the grammatical concord, the study recommends that designers of basic school English curriculum endeavour to include all the categories or types of concord in the syllabus. These categories can be spread throughout the three-year programme of the Junior High School in the Ghanaian educational context. Based on the findings of this study, it is suggested that textbook writers should not limit the contents in textbooks they write to the principle grammatical concord. They should emphasise the other categories. In addition, they should include sufficient exercises that will help both teachers and students to understand and gain both implicit and explicit knowledge of the rules of concord thereby improving the proficiency of these teachers of English and their students.

The findings indicate that teachers have a role to play in resolving issues of concord among basic school pupils. Teachers of English, especially those at the Junior High Schools, must do well to understand all the rules of concord so that in their teaching, they can explain the rules with dexterity for students to internalize the various aspects of the broader concept of concord such as noun-pronoun, verb-verb, and determiner-noun. If teachers of English can decipher which concord rule may be applicable in a particular context, they can help to clarify a concord rule that perhaps

was misunderstood or partially learned by their students. Teachers of English should feel a strong sense of responsibility towards the students they teach. They should not be only concerned with the success of their students in both internal and external examinations, but these teachers should maintain a good relationship with their students. Positive teacher- student relationship develops and improves students' academic performance. Teachers who are affable, maintain a good relationship with their students, and are responsive to their academic needs contribute greatly to the academic well-being of the students.

According to Otavio (2013), teachers should make students more sensitive to concord rules in the input that surrounds them. The more these students notice and re-notice the 3rd person –s outside the classroom, the more likely they are to restructure their inter language. With this, Otavio (2013) entreats teachers to encourage students to monitor their speech, which might contribute to long term overall accuracy. Students should develop positive attitude towards the study of English Language. They should change their mind-set that English Language is automatic and it is more of speech subject than writing and should be prepared to be committed to the study of it. For instance, they should gradually move from lexical intuitive and offer erratic use of third person -s towards more conscious and systematic sort of mapping and deployment of the underlying systems when it comes to the study of concord rules. Finally, students should revise their notes on concord regularly to avoid deviations associated with concord.

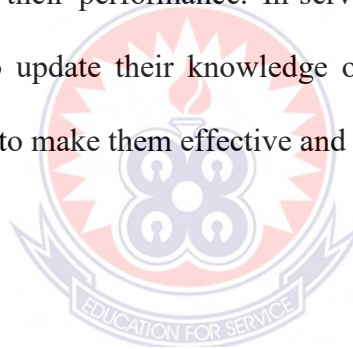
#### **5.4 Suggestions for Future Research**

This study has been carried out on limited aspect of grammar- concord. There is an urgent need to carry out similar studies on various aspects of grammar like prepositions, parallelism, and articles So as to know what could be done to improve

the communicative and linguistic competence of the pupils. Other researchers may consider researching into strategies for reducing concord errors as this will help learners and teachers as well.

### **5.5 Conclusion**

The study produce evidence that pupils in Ayetepa D/A Basic 'A' and 'B' Schools in the Ningo-Prampram district of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana have problems in applying the rules of English Language concord. As a result, they have committed these categories of concord errors: grammatical concord error, determiner-noun concord errors, verb-tense concord errors, indefinite pronoun concord errors and proximity concord errors. So, they cultivate the culture of reading because the culture of reading can improve their performance. In-service training should be organized regularly for teachers to update their knowledge on appropriate language teaching approaches for all levels to make them effective and efficient in class.





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## APPENDIX

### MULTIPLE OBJECTIVE TEST ITEMS

#### TEST ITEMS ON CONCORD TYPES

#### SECTION B

Select the appropriate options provided in the brackets.

1. The headteacher sacked one of the (**student/students**) today.
2. Many of the books I read (**was/were**) written by Ghanaians.
3. The students (**was/were**) given scholarships.
4. Daniel praised (**himself/herself**), but Nathan praised (**him/his**) father.
5. The lady gave us (**she/her**) number.
6. The lady and the gentleman shared (**they/their**) childhood memories with us.
7. He gave the book to (**I /me**).
8. The pen is (**our/ours**).
9. Ten Ghana cedis (**is/ are**) too huge a money to dash out.
10. Our staff (**is/are**) meeting today for a brief discussion on a pressing issue.
11. Each of them (**has/have**) a pen.
12. Nobody (**like/likes**) to be cheated in anything.
13. Neither the teacher nor the students (**know/knows**) the correct answer.
14. Either she, my friend or I (**is/am**) speaking the truth.
15. One of the politicians (**was/were**) summoned for a meeting yesterday.

16. Dora is one of those ladies who (**dress/dresses**) decently all the time to school.
17. My sister's workers who (**works/work**) harder (**is/are**) always tipped by her as a reward.
18. The man with his child (**was/were**) beaten severely yesterday by a gang of thieves.
19. The manager and his personal assistant (**has/have**) gone out few minutes ago..
20. Our school as well as ours (**is/are**) good in sports.
21. Rice and stew (**was/were**) served at the party.
22. We (**sweep/swept**) the classroom already.
23. The seniors (**write/wrote**) examination today.
24. Some of the meat (**is/are**) missing.
25. A quarter of the total population (**was/were**) eliminated from the game.
26. The list for the items bought (**is/are**) on the table.
27. A bouquet of roses (**lend/lends**) color and fragrance to a room.
28. The inspectors, alongside the officer (**is/are**) expected shortly.
29. These (**boy/boys**) are smart.
30. The pastor (**who/whom**) prayed for us is very powerful.



## WRITTEN ESSAY TEST

### SECTION A

In not more than 250 words, write on this topic:

Q.1. Should caning be abolished totally in our schools and classrooms? Give at least three reasons to support your arguments.

